

Albanian miners in underground hunger strike

VALIAS, Albania (R) — Eighty Albanian coal miners entered the second day of an underground hunger strike on Sunday as the country's independent unions appealed for international support for a 10-day general strike. Police surrounded the Valias pithead just north of the capital Tirana to prevent more miners joining their colleagues who barricaded themselves 200 metres underground on Saturday to support some 350,000 workers striking for better social and working conditions. A government statement carried by the state news agency ATA appealed to the miners to return to the surface, saying conditions at the pit were hazardous and posed "immense dangers menacing the strikers' lives." In Tirana, the country's three-month-old independent trade union federation urgently appealed for international help and accused the Communist authorities of using any means — including physical threats — to break the strike which has brought the country to a virtual standstill. "The government has turned a deaf ear to our demands," said the appeal issued on Saturday night and signed by federation leader Gasim Shima. "We are on the verge of general starvation. We need the world to help us. We are in need of moral and financial help."



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Ecevit ends Iraq visit

BAGHDAD (R) — Former Turkish Prime Minister Bulent Ecevit on Sunday ended a four-day visit to Baghdad during which he met President Saddam Hussein and other Iraqi leaders. The Iraqi News Agency INA quoted Ecevit, leader of the Social Democratic Party, as saying on departure his talks had been wide-ranging and resulted in important clarifications. Ecevit, who visited with a delegation at the invitation of the Iraqi government, "affirmed he was exerting big efforts to develop Iraqi-Turkish relations without any external influence." Ecevit interviewed President Saddam for the Turkish newspaper Milliyet in the run-up to the six-week Gulf war and was accompanied on this visit by the paper's news director Dirya Sazak.

35 killed in Indian ethnic violence

NEW DELHI (AP) — Security forces shot and killed 19 suspected Sikh militants in half a dozen separate firefights in Punjab, United News of India reported Sunday. The shooting broke out on Saturday night and Sunday, the news agency reported. In other violence, at least 16 people were killed in separate incidents. Most were victims of separatists, but at least two appeared to be militants killed in inter-gang rivalry, the United News reported. The deaths raise to more than 2,400 the number of civilians and militants killed in the prosperous farming state since the beginning of the year. Sunday's toll is the highest daily toll in the past two months. There was no immediate explanation for the escalation in violence. Sikh militants have been fighting for an independent state in Punjab since 1982. They claim their community is discriminated against by Hindus.

Iraq to repair Shiite shrines

NICOSIA (R) — Iraq is to spend millions of dinars repairing two Shiite shrines badly damaged in fighting between government troops and rebels during the failed southern uprising against the Baghdad government. During the fighting in March, rebels barricaded themselves in the golden-domed shrine of Imam Hussein in the Shiite holy city of Karbala, in their last defence against Iraqi tank-backed troops. The Iraqi News Agency INA Sunday quoted Minister of Endowments and Religious Affairs Abdullah Fadhl as saying repairs to two shrines would cost 15 million dinars (\$48 million at official rates), and would use 40 kilograms of gold and 160 kilograms of silver.

Kuwaiti defence minister in Cairo

CAIRO (R) — Kuwait's Defence Minister Sheikh Ali Sabah Al Salem Al Sabah arrived in key Gulf ally Egypt on Sunday to discuss military cooperation and Gulf security arrangements, Egypt's MENA news agency said. Sheikh Ali, appointed in a cabinet reshuffle last month, will hold two days of talks with his Egyptian counterpart Mohamed Hussein Tantawi, also newly appointed in a reshuffle last week. Egypt sent tens of thousands of troops to the Gulf to help liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation.

GCC ministers to meet

NICOSIA (R) — Foreign ministers of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) will meet in Saudi Arabia next Sunday to discuss post-Gulf war security and Middle East peace, Kuwait's official news agency KUNA reported. It said the agenda would include relations with Iran and the 12-nation European Community (EC) which is working on a free trade agreement with GCC member states. KUNA, received in Cyprus, said the announcement was made by GCC Secretary General Abdullah Bishara from the council's headquarters in Riyadh.

Syria, PLO agree to 'forget the past'

DAMASCUS (R) — The PLO said Sunday that its relations with Syria were back on track following more than seven years of estrangement. Palestine Liberation Organisation executive committee member Yasser Abed Rabbo, visiting Damascus with a high-ranking PLO team, said his group and Syria had agreed to "forget the past".

Damascus backed a rebellion against PLO chief Yasser Arafat in 1983 but relations improved last year after Syria freed several hundred jailed Palestinians.

"We can say a new era in our ties will exist following this meeting... We agreed to overlook the past," Abed Rabbo said following talks with Syrian Foreign Minister Farouq Al Shara.

As well as discussing their rapprochement, the Syria-PLO talks focused on peace efforts by the United States and the Soviet Union to coax the Arabs and Israelis to the conference table.

The PLO is anxious to play a key role in any Middle East peace conference and Abed Rabbo said both Syria and the PLO supported efforts to bring peace to the region and shared common views on how to achieve it.

"We agreed with our brothers in Syria to support the success of efforts aimed at holding the conference on the basis of the international legitimacy and the presence of the United Nations and all parties concerned in continuous meeting," Abed Rabbo said.

Israel rejects any U.N. role in the proposed conference and wants a one-off ceremonial event followed by one-to-one peace talks with individual Arab states.

Syria wants the U.N. to play a key role and demands that the conference should lead to an exchange of land for peace in line with U.N. Security Council resolutions 242 and 338.

The PLO team, led by the organisation's foreign affairs chief Farouk Kaddoumi, arrived in the Syrian capital on Saturday.

The visit was the first by a PLO team to Damascus since 1988 when Mr. Arafat held talks with Syrian President Hafez Al Assad.

Following a recent visit to the region by U.S. Secretary of State James Baker, one of the prime movers of the peace conference idea, sources in Israel suggested talks might go ahead without Damascus.

But Abed Rabbo dismissed this. "There could be no conference without Syria and the PLO because they both have territories occupied by Israel," he said.

Kaddoumi, asked about peace on Saturday, said: "We are for peace. But we are committed to political principles. We are flexible but we will not give any concessions."

He added: "The one who is opposing peace is Israel. This terrorist (Israeli Prime Minister Yitzhak) Shamir... insists that Arab lands are part of greater Israel."

Eritrean rebels seize last Ethiopian port

ADDIS ABABA, Ethiopia (AP) — Eritrean rebels on Sunday claimed to have captured Assab, the last port in government hands, and a separate insurgent group moved to further encircle the capital.

Amid deteriorating conditions in this Horn of Africa nation, rebels urged government soldiers to surrender or desert their posts to avoid being used as "cannon fodder" by the collapsing military.

At least 3,000 Ethiopian soldiers and civilians crossed the border into Djibouti to escape the civil war, the French News Agency reported Sunday. Some of the soldiers carried AK-47 assault rifles, rocket launchers and machine-guns, and were reportedly fleeing the Red Sea port of Assab, the Agence France-Presse news agency reported.

In the capital of Addis Ababa, residents gathered in churches and mosques to pray for an end to the fighting and successful peace talks, which are scheduled for Monday in London.

The Eritrean insurgents, who have been fighting to control the Ethiopian province of Eritrea since 1961, completely controlled Assab by Sunday morning. Yemane Ghebremeske, a spokesman for the Eritrean People's Liberation Front, said in London. Diplomats in Addis Ababa confirmed the fall of Assab, which handles most of the nation's exports and imports, including emergency food for millions of drought victims.

It was the last port in government hands following a three-month rebel offensive that climaxed with the flight of President Mengistu Haile Mariam on Tuesday after 17 years of dictatorial rule.

With the fall of Assab, Eritrean insurgents control the country's northernmost province of Eritrea, which claims all the nation's coastline.

On Sunday, Tigrean rebels claimed to have seized the main air force base of Debre Zeit, 45 kilometres southeast of Addis Ababa.

"We took Debre Zeit totally last evening. There was not even any major resistance," said Asefa Mammo, spokesman for the Ethiopian People's Revolutionary Democratic Front in London.

Asefa said the insurgents were in "no hurry" to take Addis Ababa, but diplomats reported fighting east of the city for the first time. A move east would apparently complete the rebel encirclement of the capital.

"I think they're going to try to get all around Addis before the talks," said one Western diplomat, speaking on condition of anonymity. "Let's just hope it's abundantly clear to the government delegation that this is a wash."

"I'm not sure 'talks' is a good description," said a diplomat.



His Majesty King Hussein Saturday attends an evening reception hosted by the Prime Minister, Day anniversary (Petra photo)

Jordanians pledge to serve Nation on Independence Day

AMMAN (J.T.) — The Ministry of Youth and Culture Sunday held a special ceremony at the Royal Cultural Centre to mark Independence Day.

Addressing the celebration were a number of Jordanian figures and intellectuals. Speakers stressed Jordan's principled stands in support of the Arab causes and its continuous endeavours to achieve Arab unity and solidarity.

Speaker of the Upper House of Parliament Ahmad Al Lawzi said that Jordan had always reaffirmed its commitment and its firm belief that Arab causes should be placed on top of regional or national causes. He noted that Jordan places higher Arab interests on top of all other issues, giving them priority over national interests or concerns.

Minister of Culture and Youth Khalid Karaki said that Jordan has always been an advocate of Arab unity and has never failed any Arab country, noting that Jordan has always rejected foreign hegemony.

Karaki added that because "Jordanians are democrats, and nationalists, they are independent and have the right to celebrate this dear occasion."

Sulaiman Al Hadidi, a former president of the Jordan Bar Association, said that Jordan's role in paving the ground for the struggle for unity is a leading and major one. He hailed the national stands of

His Majesty King Hussein towards all battles imposed on the Arab Nation, beginning with the Suez war in 1956 and ending with the Gulf war in 1991.

Hadidi called on the Arab Nation to unify its ranks and to live up to challenges, and conspiracies aimed at liquidating Arab causes, including the Palestine question.

The Jordanian poet, Haidar Mahmoud, read out a poem which he wrote for the occasion. In his poem, Mahmoud praised the principled stands of the Jordanian leadership and people, and expressed hope in achieving a brighter future for the Jordanian people under the leadership of King Hussein.

Israel defies Security Council resolution, insists it will continue expelling Palestinians

TEL AVIV (R) — Foreign Minister David Levy on Sunday dismissed U.N. criticism of Israel's expulsion of four Palestinians and said his country would continue the policy if it saw fit.

Levy, speaking two days after the United Nations Security Council deplored Israel's expulsion of Arabs from the Gaza Strip, called the resolution "another anti-Israel condemnation."

"We don't have an interest in expelling people... but against inciters that stand behind operations... that endanger people's lives, we must and do undertake actions to reduce these dangers," Levy told Israel Radio.

However, Levy pointedly refrained from criticising the United States, which backed Friday's U.N. vote. Washington aided Israel's airlift of 14,500 Ethiopian Jews to Israel on Friday and Saturday.

Levy said Israel should mute its reaction to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's blunt criticism last week of Jewish settlements in the occupied West Bank and Gaza Strip.

Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir's office issued a statement on the U.N. resolution saying: "This is not the first time that it shows an unbalanced stance."

Speaking after the weekly cabinet meeting, Levy said: "I

proposed my friends not get angry or bitter... anger over this, though justified, will bring undesirable tension."

The United States sees the nearly 100,000 Jews settled among 1.75 million Palestinians in the occupied Arab lands as an obstacle to convening Arab-Israeli peace talks.

Israel's rightwing government regards Jewish settlement in the lands occupied during the 1967 Middle East war as a God-given right and a necessity for military security.

Reaction to the U.N. criticism in Israel, normally strong and swift, did not appear until Sunday as attention focused on the airlift of nearly 15,000 Ethiopian Jews to Israel.

Israel had accused the four deportees of being activists in the mainline Fatah movement of the Palestine Liberation Organisation who were behind violent acts against Israel and fellow Arabs. Israel has frequently been attacked for its methods of fighting the Palestinian uprising in the West Bank and Gaza Strip, site of a revolt since December 1987.

The Jewish state has expelled 66 Palestinians during the uprising. The U.N., backed by the United States, believes the policy violates the Fourth Geneva Convention on treatment of civilians

during war. In the West Bank village of Dura Al Kara, Israeli soldiers shot dead a Palestinian man active in the uprising against Israeli occupation of the West Bank on Saturday night, military sources said Sunday.

They said Ibrahim Abdul Kasam, 23, was killed when soldiers fired on a group of masked men who were beating a resident of Dura Al Kara village, near Ramallah, and had ignored orders to stop.

They claimed Abdul Kasam was known as the village representative of Fatah, the mainstream Palestine Liberation Organisation group.

The village resident was in critical condition following the beating, the Israeli sources said. In the occupied Gaza Strip, two Palestinians were killed for collaborating with the authorities against the 41-month-long Palestinian uprising, Palestinian sources said.

Masked men stabbed to death Nabila Abu Hatub, 25, in Khan Yunis refugee camp and Hitham Mughari, 21, in separate attacks in Gaza city, the sources said.

The dead woman and man were known collaborators, they said.

Since the beginning of the revolt, Israelis have killed 798 Palestinians.

Japan plans \$500m aid for Kurds

TOKYO (AP) — Japan plans to provide \$500 million to help cope with post-Gulf war problems — the amount the United States contends it still owes from a previous pledge, Kyodo news service reported Sunday. Quoting unnamed government sources, Kyodo said the aid would be for Kurdish refugees and environmental cleanup work. Foreign ministry officials said there has been no decision on additional aid. But they have said Japan was willing to consider aid to help cope with post-war Middle East problems. Japan's latest pledge of aid to the allied forces that drove Iraq out of Kuwait had been calculated at \$9 billion, but its yen currency had weakened by the time the contribution was approved in parliament and handed over. The United States has insisted that Japan make up the resulting \$500 million shortfall. Japan has said its taxpayers have delivered the yen payment that the government pledged, and that it did not intend to compensate for the exchange-rate fluctuations. Kyodo quoted the sources as saying the new aid will be earmarked for Gulf war aftermath problems, but in fact it does cover the shortfall. When U.S. Vice President Dan Quayle visited Japan last week, Prime Minister Toshiki Kaifu told him he hoped U.S.-Japan relations would not suffer from the dispute over the contribution.

One Jordanian acquitted Kuwaiti court postpones trial of 17 to June 9

KUWAIT CITY (Agencies) — Kuwait's martial law court on Sunday gave lawyers for 17 suspected collaborators, including the first accused of murder, until June 9 to prepare their defence.

Following a pattern established over the past week, the panel of three civilian and two military judges read the general charges of collaboration to each suspect.

They then appointed lawyers for defendants without them and postponed the hearing to give lawyers time to prepare.

Meanwhile, the government was expected Sunday to extend martial law for three more months. It was implemented on Kuwait's Feb. 26 liberation from Iraqi occupation.

In one poignant courtroom scene Sunday, a Palestinian mother gripped the steel bars of the cage where her accused son Omar Shahad Omran was seated and both burst into tears.

"He never stole anything in his life," said Nasmaiyya Omran, referring to the charge that her son had stolen xerox machines. He worked as a nurse.

His parents said he wrote them a letter saying he confessed to the crime after his March 10 arrest to stop beatings and electric shocks in jail. They believe a fight with his hospital boss led to the arrest.

Kuwait's chief justice has denied that any suspects have been brought to court on the basis of confessions extracted under torture.

The trials are being monitored by Western embassies and human rights organisations after repeated reports that suspects were tortured and denied access to attorneys.

Six defendants appeared in court Sunday, and all pleaded not guilty. Lawyers for most of the rest also entered pleas of innocent.

The defendants included four Jordanians, four Iraqis, seven stateless Arabs and two Kuwaitis. No details about the murder case were released.

A few suspects were not brought to the court because the order for appearance was delivered to the wrong prison, court officials said.

Iraq names 11 officials killed in March revolt

BAGHDAD (Agencies) — Iraq's ruling Baath Party announced on Sunday the names of 11 senior party officials killed in March during a Shiite Muslim uprising in the south and a Kurdish rebellion in the north.

The 11 men include Taha Yassin Shahadha, the governor of Dhi Qar province in the south, and two other members of the Baath leadership in the province.

The capital of Dhi Qar is Nasiriyah, one of the first towns to rebel after the defeat of the Iraqi army in Kuwait.

The other party officials were from the southern provinces of Basra, Najaf, Karbala and Misan, two were from the Kurdish province of Sulaimaniya and one was a trade union activist killed about 100 kilometres south of Baghdad.

All were killed between March 3 and March 11, the period during which Shiites and Kurdish guerrillas took control of most towns in their regions. Government troops have since regained control of all the main towns outside a safety zone set up by Western troops for Kurdish refugees in northern Iraq.

The announcement in the army newspaper Al Qadisiyyah was the first of its kind since the rebellions.

The death notices included a photograph and brief biography of each official and said they were "martyred while resisting acts of anarchism by criminal hoodlums."

The Iraqi government says the rebels were criminals armed and encouraged by neighbouring Iran.

The previous governor of Sulaimaniya is missing presumed killed, his successor said this week.

Iraq also said Sunday it has found the bodies of 50 Iraqi soldiers purportedly killed by Iranian infiltrators trying to foment rebellion.

officials said. These included Zuhair Oniyat, a former body guard for Salah Khalaf, a top figure in the Palestine Liberation Organisation who was assassinated in Tunisia in January.

A total 175 cases of collaboration, some involving more than one suspect, are due to be brought to trial over the next two months.

The presiding judge, Mohammad Al Mutari, denied one attorney access to the police file on a Kuwaiti suspect because the attorney requested that his client not appear in court.

Attorney Laith Al Mulla said his client was falsely accused by neighbours of aiding the Iraqis and burglary.

"The neighbours who denounced him would not even go to the prosecutor general's office to testify," Al Mulla said.

The lawyer said he was leaving for France to bring back details of collaboration trials there because "there is a judicial void on the subject of collaboration in Kuwait."

Kuwaiti law is based on the French and Egyptian systems. On Saturday, the court acquitted a Jordanian who was found with a single bullet and charged with possession of firearms.

Yasser Al Samhuri was freed on Saturday on condition he was of good behaviour for the next six months.

The court also acquitted a Turk, Ragab Almas, of charges of theft and helping the Iraqis. Presiding judge Mohammed Bin Naji quoted witnesses as saying Almas, an employee of a Kuwait-based construction company, was seen wearing a military uniform during the occupation.

Samhuri and Almas were on a charge sheet of 41 people which also included one Kuwaiti, one Saudi, 18 Jordanians mostly of Palestinian origin, 10 Iraqis and six bedouins (stateless residents of Kuwait). Three other men on the list are still at large and their nationalities were not given.

Only 25 of the accused appeared on Saturday and all pleaded not guilty.

The report said the slain men had been left in the open air. It gave no other details.

Previously, Iraq said it discovered on May 5 the bodies of about 100 men who the government said were killed last month by Iraqis and rebels in southern Iraq.

Iraqi army officials said those bodies were of civilians and soldiers who had been taken prisoner.

The accounts of how the men died could not be confirmed.

Meanwhile, Iraq has pegged its number of military and civilian deaths in the Gulf war at 110,000 to 150,000, an unofficial French group investigating the war reported Sunday.

The number of dead breaks down to 35,000 to 45,000 civilians and 75,000 to 100,000 soldiers, said members returning from a six-day fact-finding mission to Baghdad.

The figures were established from data provided by the Iraqi foreign and information ministries and Baath Party officials in the Iraqi army.

The group, comprised mainly of leftist writers, lawyers, anti-racism activists and a former general, urged the United Nations to lift economic sanctions still in place against Iraq.

Arabs condemn airlift of Ethiopian Jews

By Jane Arraf Reuter

AMMAN — Arabs reacted with alarm to Israel's massive airlift of Ethiopian Jews, seeing it as threat to peace. Some called it proof of U.S. duplicity.

The 22-hour evacuation of 15,000 Ethiopian Jews fed Arab anger over Israeli settlement on captured Arab land.

Many Arabs were convinced Israel would move some of the immigrants into the occupied territories in spite of the fact that Washington, which helped arrange the exodus of Ethiopia's black Jews, publicly opposes settlements there.

"When I heard the news that 15,000 Ethiopian Jews were going to Israel I was angry because they are going to live in Arab lands," said Nazmi Sabbah, a Jordanian shopkeeper of Palestinian origin.

"Fifteen thousand will come in and 15,000 Palestinian Arabs will lose their land, lose their jobs," said Amr, a 30-year-old Jordanian engineer.

Most discounted Israel's expressions of fear for the safety of Ethiopian Jews, known as Falashas, who were whisked away in a secret airlift as rebels closed in around Addis Ababa.

They said Israel, which evacuated 12,000 Falashas in its covert "Operation Moses" in 1984-85, had used the disintegration of Ethiopia as a pretext to increase its Jewish population.

The Saudi newspaper Al Bilad said: "Israel's aim behind moving the Falashas and also Jews from the Soviet Union... is to impose an extreme-

ly complex situation on the occupied Arab territories by building new settlements ostensibly to accommodate Jewish immigrants."

"This will hamper peace efforts in the region, and the peace-loving world should heed this fact."

Syria's official daily Al Baath described the transfer as a "big international conspiracy" which Arabs had to confront or be pushed out of their own lands.

The newspaper, which speaks for the ruling Baath Party in Syria — a country Washington is trying to bring to a peace conference with Israel — called Zionism a "cancerous disease" which threatened the entire world.

East Jerusalem's Al Sha'ab newspaper wrote that "the

U.S. administration certainly knows the influx, with U.S. help, strengthens the tendency of Israeli leaders towards settlement and increases their appetite to bite off more occupied territory."

The mass migration touched an ever-present fear in Jordan that Jewish settlement in the West Bank is intended by Israel to force thousands of Palestinians into Jordan.

Jordan's Al Ra'i said in a front-page editorial that "this (American) duplicity itself can only serve to encourage the Israeli aggressors to continue with their intransigence."

Bahrain's Gulf Daily News warned that the evacuation could provide a new flashpoint in the region if the immigrants are allowed to resettle in the occupied territories.

The Damascus-based Democratic Front for the Liberation of Palestine condemned the transfer of Ethiopian Jews to Israel "at the time when the Israeli authorities expelled four Palestinians from their homeland."

"People from Ethiopia and the Soviet Union... are given immediate residence, while the Palestinian people are prevented from living freely on their land," said a DFLP statement received in Cyprus.

The DFLP also accused Washington of using double standards.

"It is about time this duplicity be treated with some justice and balance. The tragedy of Ethiopians — Jews and non-Jews — cannot be solved by escalating the tragedy of the Palestinian people," it said.

OPENING SOON
SMART LOOK

U.N. chief hopes for Western Sahara ceasefire next month

RABAT (R) — United Nations Secretary-General Javier Perez De Cuellar said Sunday he hoped there would be a formal ceasefire in Western Sahara next month to end 15 years of guerrilla war.

"I hope there will be a ceasefire as soon as possible. In June, I hope," he said at the airport before leaving for neighbouring Algeria.

He said he hoped a referendum could be held to settle the conflict before the end of this year by giving the people a choice between integration with Morocco and independence.

"My aim is to finish with this before the end of this year, if possible in November," he said.

Perez De Cuellar discussed the U.N. peace plan Saturday with Morocco's King Hassan, who also headed for Algeria Sunday for two days of talks with President Chadli Benjedid.

Under the plan, a U.N. mission composed of about 2,800 troops,

police and civilians, will take over the territory to organise the referendum, 20 weeks after a formal ceasefire.

The referendum will give about 74,000 people in the thinly-populated territory a choice between independence and integration with Morocco.

Perez De Cuellar said he would have talks with Polisario leader Mohammed Abdul Aziz in Agadez, Nigeria, during a summit of the Organisation of African Unity (OAU) from June 3-5.

Polisario, whose guerrillas have their main bases in western Algeria around the Tindouf Oasis, has been fighting Morocco since 1976. Its political arm, the Saharan Arab Democratic Republic, is a member of the OAU.

Polisario and Morocco have both accepted U.N. plans for a ceasefire and self-determination referendum. But they have reservations over details like identification of eligible voters and the

deployment of military forces during the vote.

Algeria gave full support to the guerrillas in the former Spanish colony until 1988, when normal relations were restored with Morocco after a 12-year rift over the desert war.

King Hassan has frequently said he is sure the people of the desert will vote for Morocco. But political analysts in Rabat say the king wants to convince the Algerians integration with Morocco is preferable to independence.

"There has to be an arrangement. For internal reasons, neither Algeria nor Morocco have any interest in having an independent mini-state which would be a constant source of instability in the region," a senior Moroccan politician told Reuters.

While Moroccan officials decline to comment on the king's visit to Algeria, the opposition press expects Algeria to support

an outcome favourable to Morocco.

The conservative Istiqlal Party, which has spearheaded Morocco's claims to adjacent territories, said it expects Algeria to "convince the Polisario to abandon a lost cause."

The party daily L'Opinion added: "The referendum organised by the U.N. in the Sahara, if it takes place, will be affirmative (for Morocco)."

The king's talks with Chadli near Oran in western Algeria will also cover the Arab Maghreb Union (AMU) which is due to hold a special summit in Libya June 7 and 8 on the post-Gulf war situation in the Arab World.

Composed of Algeria, Libya, Mauritania, Morocco and Tunisia, the AMU is an embryonic North African common market dedicated to promoting regional integration.

Family reunited at Kuwait collaboration trial

KUWAIT (R) — Palestinian Shihada Abdullah found his 30-year-old son Omar Sunday, on trial for collaborating with Iraq during its occupation of Kuwait.

Abdullah, who had not seen his son since his arrest two months ago, recognised him as one of four men in the defendants' barred courtroom cage, hiding their faces from news cameras.

The collaboration charge carries a maximum penalty of death. The family by Kuwaiti soldiers was cut short by the 62-year-old petrol station manager and his wife back to their seats at the back of the court.

The soldiers sent Abdullah, a resident of Kuwait for the past 40 years, out of the courtroom. He sat in the corridor outside and wept.

Omar, a nurse born in Kuwait, faces charges of aiding the Iraqis during their seven-month occupation of the emirate, and theft. He and five other defendants facing similar charges pleaded not guilty. Their cases were postponed to June 9.

Allies say security in Dohuk not their problem

DOHUK, Iraq (R) — U.S.-led allies in northern Iraq have disclaimed responsibility for security in the provincial town of Dohuk where angry Kurds stormed an Iraqi police station.

"There will be no allied response to the disturbance. We are here solely to clean up Dohuk and resettle refugees," U.S. Lieutenant-Colonel Gary Goff, head of the 157-strong allied recovery team in the Iraqi provincial capital, said Sunday.

The allies said they would only intervene in disturbances if humanitarian aid efforts were threatened.

On Saturday, angry Kurds, some armed with iron bars, stormed a police station in Dohuk where they beat several Iraqi policemen, saved from serious injuries by Kurdish peshmerga

guerrillas who defused the riot. Tens of thousands of Kurdish refugees have flocked home to Dohuk since Friday, emptying border camps once bustling with half a million people and raising the prospect of a coalition withdrawal from northern Iraq by mid-June.

"The Kurds are very furious and strong-willed people, and naturally we are concerned about what will happen here after the coalition leaves," said a senior Western source in Dohuk.

Coalition officials expect a post-Gulf war U.N. presence, including 500 security guards in the Kurdish north, will protect the Kurds from possible revenge after the allies leave.

The Kurds fled from Dohuk in March after the collapse of the post-Gulf war Kurdish uprising.

Reassured by the presence of thousands of coalition troops, the Kurds are now streaming back to their war-blasted cities.

In Dohuk, the largest Kurdish town in the allied security sphere, residents say security agents are dressed as uniformed Iraqi police.

Coalition and U.N. officials say they are taking Baghdad at its word that all security forces were removed from Dohuk to speed the return of refugees.

They play down the riot, in which protesters burned an Iraqi flag and called for a permanent allied presence in Dohuk, as a "blip in an otherwise smooth repatriation effort."

"It was all over in half an hour..." the senior Western official said.

No regional security without Palestinian solution — GCC chief

RIYADH, Saudi Arabia (AP) — The man who is to represent Gulf states at a proposed Arab-Israeli conference said Saturday there will be no real security in the Middle East without a settlement of the Palestinian problem.

"Security in the Gulf will remain incomplete until tension in the Middle East is eliminated, mainly by redressing (problems of) the Palestinian people and allowing them to exercise self-determination," said Abdullah Bishara.

Bishara made the comments in a speech to leading Gulf statesmen in ceremonies marking the Gulf Cooperation Council's (GCC) 10th anniversary.

The 55-year-old Bishara, a career diplomat from Kuwait, has been secretary-general of the six-nation Gulf Arab alliance since its founding on May 25, 1981.

U.S. Secretary of State James Baker said this month that the GCC states had agreed to send their secretary-general as an observer to the Arab-Israeli peace talks he is trying to

PLO, which led to the ouster of the U.S. envoy Andrew Young.

The GCC states were angered by the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) pro-Iraqi tilt during the Gulf war.

In an interview with the Associated Press, Bishara said that dispute "will in no way diminish our eagerness to see decisive solutions" to the Arab-Israeli question.

"But we will participate in the projected Arab-Israeli parleys more as backers and less as initiators," he said.

The GCC countries — Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab Emirates, Oman, Qatar and Bahrain — were not directly involved in the conflict with Israel, he said.

"We are not confrontation powers, and we would rather let the others who are directly concerned with the Middle East question to handle it."

The impact of Israel's powerful military force on the region, the instability caused by the grievances of millions of Palestinians displaced by Israel and pan-Arab sympathy with them have made the conflict important to Gulf states.

Bishara also said the Gulf alliance will have to develop its own military power.

"A unified Gulf army is an unavoidable option," he said.

"And until this aspiration becomes reality, we may turn to sisterly and friendly powers for help, if need be."

He was referring to the U.S.-led Western forces that evicted Iraqi forces from Kuwait last February and helped reinstate the Al Sabah dynasty as rulers of the tiny emirate.

Bishara also cited Egypt and Syria for "smashing the machinations" of Iraqi President Saddam Hussein.

"We have the firm up the mechanics and instruments of collective security, and this can be attained through political, military and economic cooperation among the GCC powers," he said.

In his speech, he said the organisation "has survived wars and crises. We have learned our lesson, and we know who to trust and who to distrust."

Bishara was alluding to the PLO, Jordan, Sudan, Yemen and other Arab powers that failed to support foreign help in ousting Iraq from Kuwait.

Bishara said the "spirit of the Damascus pact will govern and guide our relations with all Arab powers."

That post-war pact was signed by the GCC countries, Syria and Egypt. It stresses the sovereignty of individual Arab states and rules out military force to settle

intra-Arab disputes.

The pact also called for Egypt and Syria to form the nucleus of a 100,000-strong pan-Arab force to help defend the GCC countries against future threats.

Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak recently declared he was pulling out his forces from the Gulf, touching off widespread speculation Egyptian-Gulf relations were becoming uneasy.

But Bishara said Egyptian and Syrian forces "will always be available" to help defend the Gulf region if necessary.

Bishara said "Gulf security arrangements may also include Iran," which forms the entire eastern shore of the Gulf and has sometimes threatened the Arab states of the western shore.

The GCC countries sided with Iraq during its 1980-88 war with Iran. But Iraq's invasion of Kuwait, and Iran's neutrality, dramatically shifted the Gulf Arabs' security outlook.

Bishara said that since all GCC states have now restored their ties with Tehran "we have to labour for regional understanding and collaboration."

"We desire healthy and developing ties between the GCC countries and Iran, based on mutual interests and confidence."

He said Iraq "will not be admitted to any Gulf-wide security arrangement."

Defence lawyers say the defendants were tortured and made confessions under duress.

Kuwait has affirmed the trials are fair in response to accusations by diplomats and non-Kuwaiti residents of a witch-hunt against members of expatriate communities, particularly Palestinians.

There were some 400,000 Palestinians, mostly holding Jordanian passports, in Kuwait before Iraq invaded last August. They now number no more than 200,000.

Palestinians say they have been victimised because of Palestine Liberation Organisation support for Iraq during the Gulf crisis.

A front-page editorial in Sunday's Al Fajr Al Jadid (new dawn) daily commended the judiciary's handling of the trials.

"Kuwait's enemies expected, or let us say hoped for, a flurry of death sentences so they could create an uproar against Kuwait, the judiciary of Kuwait and the reputation of Kuwait."

"They waited in vain for something they could call unjust to come from the bastion of impartiality and justice..."

Trials are held before a five-man martial law court whose decision is final.

Defence lawyer Emad Al Saif, who is handling about 15 collaboration cases, told Reuters Sunday many of the defendants had been tortured immediately after their arrest by police, army troops or members of the Kuwaiti resistance.

Abdullah showed Reuters a piece of paper which he said was a letter from his son saying he had confessed to stealing a car after being tortured with electric shocks.

"Dear father, beloved mother, pray for me that my ordeal comes to an end," it read.

Iraqi Shiite leader calls for U.N.-backed referendum

NICOSIA, Cyprus (AP) — The head of a Shiite Muslim rebellion against Iraqi President Saddam Hussein called Saturday for a U.N.-sponsored referendum in that country.

Hojatollah Bager Hakim, head of the supreme assembly of the Islamic Revolution of Iraq, reported the plan in an interview broadcast by Tehran Radio, monitored here.

He said the plan would guarantee the rights of all Iraqis, but gave no details. Officials of the groups' office in Syria said one key element was a nationwide vote on whether Saddam should remain in power.

The Shiite proposal comes as Kurdish rebels are in Baghdad negotiating an autonomy agreement with the government that

calls for multiparty democracy throughout Iraq.

Leaders of the Shiites, who make up 55 per cent of Iraq's population, have been wary of the Kurdish talks, fearing that they will leave President Saddam in power.

Shiite and Kurdish dissidents joined in an uprising against President Saddam following the Gulf war, but government forces largely crushed their forces after weeks of fighting.

Scattered fighting has continued in the Shiite south and Kurdish rebels still hold the highlands to which they retreated when Iraqi forces recaptured Kurdish cities.

Hakim said damage to Shiite shrines caused by the battles had weakened the government, driving a rift between it and the people.

Hakim said Shiite rebels recently carried out operations in the southern cities of Basra and Al Amara.

The radio said explosions from the fighting were heard in the Iranian border city of Bostan.

On Friday, the Shiite Dawra Party office in Syria reported that a commander of Iraqi forces in the south, Brig. Ali Hussein Maazal Al Mouhammadi, had revolted against the government, along with his troops and cut the road between Basra and Al Amara.

It also said that clashes were continuing in other southern cities. But the reports could not be independently confirmed.

Kuwait considering options to finance reconstruction

KUWAIT (R) — Kuwait's finance minister said in remarks published Saturday that selling oil "borrowed" from Gulf allies was an option being studied to finance the rebuilding of Kuwait after the Gulf war.

Nasser Abdullah Al Rodhan was quoted as saying the other two options were commercial borrowing and the use of the emirate's huge overseas investments.

He acknowledged that the government had a liquidity problem in financing reconstruction but gave no figures and the London-based Sawt Al Kuwait (Voice of Kuwait) newspaper provided no direct quotes.

It was believed to be the first time the government had spelled out its options for the financing of the rebuilding of Kuwait.

Western media reports say the government is having problems raising short term finance because Western banks want collateral in the form of investments or future oil production.

The cost of reconstruction is estimated at between \$30 and

\$100 billion. Much of the total will have to be spent on repairing the wrecked oil industry, mainstay of the country's wealth.

Iraq's troops set some 500 wells ablaze and opened the taps on others. Oilmen say it could be more than a year before Kuwait produces at its pre-war level of two million barrels per day.

The minister said borrowing oil from its Gulf neighbours was one option under review. This is allowed under rules of the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC).

Saudi Arabia, a staunch backer of Kuwait, could produce extra barrels, oil sources said. It is currently pumping more than eight million b/d but is thought to have the capacity for 10 million.

Oil industry sources said there were reports that members of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) would meet in Riyadh at the end of the month to discuss a Kuwaiti request to borrow oil.

The GCC states are Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, the United Arab

Emirates, Bahrain, Oman and Qatar. All but Bahrain and Oman are OPEC states.

The Kuwaiti minister was also quoted as saying another option was to "register its assets and investments abroad."

"As a result Kuwait would get liquidity to overcome a liquidity problem and finance the reconstruction programme," the newspaper said.

Kuwait's overseas assets, which include shares in British Petroleum, Daimler Benz, the U.S.-based oil firm Santa Fe and a network of refineries and filling stations in Europe are valued at up to \$120 billion, bankers said.

"It looks as though he is saying the assets could be used to secure loans," one foreign banker in Kuwait said. "In the past that is something they were most reluctant to do."

The third option, the newspaper said, was "purely commercial transactions by borrowing from international commercial banks." The daily gave no other details.

American academics plan return to Beirut

By Ragip Erten
Reuters

DUBAI — American academics forced out during Lebanon's civil war by the murder and kidnapping of their colleagues are preparing to return to their posts at the American University of Beirut (AUB).

"I do not want to advertise the time of my return, but we can say soon," said AUB President Frederic Herter, who last saw the city at the height of the civil war.

"Prospects in Beirut are now looking good," he told Reuters in an interview in Dubai.

Herter has run the university from New York since he was appointed to succeed Malcolm Kerr, who was shot dead on the AUB campus in predominantly Muslim west Beirut in January 1984.

The university, set up in 1866 as the Middle East's first English-language higher education institution, never closed its doors in 16 years of fighting although its east Beirut annex shut for four months last year due to inter-Christian clashes.

The AUB, which attracted stu-

dents from Africa and Asia as well as the Middle East, was a prime target for hostage-takers although it is independent with no connection to the U.S. government.

Dean of Agriculture Thomas Sutherland and Deputy Comptroller Joseph James Cicippio — kidnapped in 1985 and 1986 respectively — are among the six Americans still held captive in Lebanon. Three Britons, two Germans and an Italian are also hostages.

Since Syrian-backed Lebanese troops drove out the militias to reunite greater Beirut late last year, life has begun to return to normal in the devastated Mediterranean port.

"The American ambassador is back in Beirut, and Americans are returning to live. But the unofficial travel ban of the state department is still on," Herter said.

The proportion of foreign pupils among the 5,000 that enter every year fell to seven or eight per cent during the war from 40 per cent in early 1970s.

Armed students harassed

administrators and fellow pupils until the arrival of Syrian troops in the mid-1980s.

The medical school's hospital was bombed but it continued to treat civil war casualties.

Some 85 artillery shells fell on the campus during the last phase of fighting between two rival Christian militias last year but it remained largely intact. "Compared to the rest of Beirut we got off very lightly," Herter said.

Herter's deputy Ibrahim Saki, a Jordanian, handles the day-to-day running of the university in Lebanon.

"We have a very good communication system between New York and Beirut and Dr. Saki and I talk virtually every day," Herter said, adding that he used to travel to nearby Cyprus to meet faculty, staff and students.

He said his non-American staff had kept up the American style of education during the war, though some former graduates say standards have dropped over the last decade.

"The kids who came out of AUB since 1980 are not up to the old standards but who can blame

them?" said a 1960s graduate, now a senior information officer in a Gulf state.

Assassinated Kerr's predecessor David Dodge was kidnapped from the campus in 1982 during the Israeli invasion of Lebanon and freed a year later.

Librarian Peter Kilburn, seized in 1984, was killed in 1986 in what his kidnappers said was retaliation for a U.S. air raid on Libya.

AUB Hospital Director David Jacobsen was kidnapped in 1985 and released in 1987. Irishman Brian Keenan, who taught English at AUB, was kidnapped in 1986 and freed last year.

The university's east Beirut annex opened in 1976 for 30 students and now has 1,300, a third of the total enrolment. The two campuses were reintegrated last year.

Herter and Saki were in Dubai on a tour of Gulf states to seek support and funds for the university.

More than 3,000 AUB graduates work in the region — Gulf nationals, Lebanese, Palestinians and others. Some are ministers and others top ranking officials.

Algeria says strike failed

ALGIERS (R) — Algerian Prime Minister Mouloud Hamrouche said an indefinite general strike called by Muslim fundamentalists had failed.

"According to information in my possession, I can say the strike has failed," he said on television Saturday night.

"We are against political strikes, which contradict democratic logic and the constitution. Trade unions have the right to strike but not political parties," he added.

The strike was called Saturday

by the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), the largest opposition party, in support of a series of demands related to the country's first multi-party elections June 27.

The walkout has been largely ignored with major industries, including the oil and gas sector, working normally.

FIS spokesman claimed the strike was between 40 and 70 per cent effective in areas such as Oran in the west and Blida south of Algiers. Eyewitnesses said there was no disruption of econo-

mic activity.

The only incident reported was when a freight train was halted by fundamentalist unionists, causing delays to suburban passenger services.

A few thousand FIS supporters dressed in white spent the night sleeping in public squares in Algiers.

The FIS wants new electoral laws scrapped, claiming they favour candidates of the ruling National Liberation Front Party in office since independence 29 years ago.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

JORDAN TELEVISION	
Tel: 773111-19	
PROGRAMME TWO	
18:00	La Belle Anglaise
19:00	News in French
19:15	Weekly Sports Magazine
19:30	News in Hebrew
20:00	News in Arabic
20:30	Empty Nest
21:10	Nancy Wake
22:00	News in English
22:30	Derrick
PRAYER TIMES	
03:59	Fajr
12:29	(Sunrise) Duha
13:02	Dhuhr
15:05	Asr
18:57	Maghrib
20:00	Isha
CERCHES	
St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swifflith Tel. 816740	
Agapies of God Church Tel. 813735	
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624390	
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440	

De la Salle Church Tel. 661757	Terrace Church Tel. 623266
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541	Armenian Church Tel. 623383
628543	Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 711331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 712261	Syrian Orthodox Church Tel. 771751
Armenian International Church Tel. 685326	Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811295
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 815817, 654932	
Church of Nazareth Tel. 675691	
WEATHER	
Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology	
It will be relatively cold and partly cloudy and there will be a chance for scattered showers of rain. Winds will be northwesterly fresh, causing dust in desert areas. In Agaba, winds will be northerly fresh and seas wavy.	
Amman	Min./Max. temp. 12/21

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Mohammed Mansa	741444
Dr. Anwar Al Haj	710200
Dr. Abdul Aziz Taboun	783708
Dr. Yousef Sammour	615648
Endows pharmacy	661912
778336	
Al Asoma pharmacy	637055
Nairookh pharmacy	623672
Al Salab pharmacy	636750
Yazoub pharmacy	644945
Shmiciant pharmacy	637660
NIGHT DUTY	
AMMAN:	
Dr. Mohammed Mansa	741444
Dr. Anwar Al Haj	710200
Dr. Abdul Aziz Taboun	783708
Dr. Yousef Sammour	615648
Endows pharmacy	661912
778336	
Al Asoma pharmacy	637055
Nairookh pharmacy	623672
Al Salab pharmacy	636750
Yazoub pharmacy	644945
Shmiciant pharmacy	637660

EMERGENCIES	
Food Control Centre	637111
Civil Defence Department	661111
Rescue	630341
Civil Defence Emergency	199
Police	192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade	891228
Blood Bank	775121
Highway Police	843402
Traffic Police	843402
Public Security Department	630321
Hotel Complaints	605800
Price Complaints	661176
Water and Sewerage	661176
Complaints	897467
Amman Municipality	

HOSPITALS	
AMMAN:	
Hussein Medical Centre	813813/32
Khalid Maternity, J. Amm.	644281/6
Al-Bashir, J. Amm.	644281/6
Jabal Amman Maternity	642362
Mallat, J. Amman	636140
Palestine, Shmiciant	664171/4
Shmiciant Hospital	669131
University Hospital	843845
AIRPORTS	
Complaints	787111
Telephone Information	121
(directory assistance)	101330
Overseas Calls	101330
Central Amman Telephone	623101
Repairs	623101
Abdali Telephone Repairs	661101
Jordan Television	773111
Radio Jordan	773111
Water Authority	680100
Jordan Electricity Authority	815615
Electric Power	636381
RJ Flight Information	08-53200
Queen Alia Intl. Airport	08-53200

ARRIVALS	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
08:20	Dhahran (RJ)
18:15	Jeddah, Samarra (RJ)
18:45	Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
11:15	Larnaca, Damascus (RJ)
17:30	Riyadh (RJ)
19:00	Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
14:45	Bahrain (GF)
20:05	Cairo (MS)
DEPARTURES	
Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)	
12:00	Riyadh (RJ)
12:30	Montreal, New York (RJ)
20:05	Bahrain, Doha (RJ)
21:30	Dubai, Muscat (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)	
14:55	Bahrain (GF)

MARKET PRICES	
Upper/lower price in fils per kg.	
Apple	530 / 500
Banana	500 / 450
Beans (Mushammar)	450 / 400
Beans	450 / 400
Broad beans	480 / 400
Cabbage	140 / 100
Carrot	180 / 140
Cauliflower	180 / 120
Cucumbers (large)	120 / 80
Cucumbers (small)	250 / 200
Eggplant	350 / 300
Garlic	480 / 400
Lemon	320 / 280
Lettuce (per one)	150 / 100
Marrow (large)	120 / 80
Marrow (small)	270 / 220
Onion (dry)	160 / 120
Onion (green)	170 / 120
Orange	350 / 300

Home News

Algeria symposium tackles economic policy within an Islamic perspective — official

AMMAN (Petra) — Director General of the Orphan's Fund Abdul Salam Al Abbadi Sunday returned home after taking part in a symposium, on economic policy within an Islamic perspective, which was held in Algeria last week.

In an arrival statement Mr. Abbadi said the symposium was held by the Algeria University of Saffi in cooperation with the Jeddah-based Islamic Institute for Training and Research.

The symposium tackled various subjects, including financing the development plans in the Muslim World and defining relations between the private and public sectors, he said.

He added that he presented three working papers at the symposium on objectives of the Islamic law and achieving the welfare and happiness of mankind, private property — its restrictions and social functions — and the legal and moral bases for economic behaviour from an Islamic point of view.

He noted that the symposium came up with a number of recommendations in the field of economic policies, focussing on the need to take balanced measures, capable of advancing national economy and providing equal opportunities for all citizens.

Taking part in the symposium was a number of researchers and scholars from Jordan, Syria, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Algeria, Iraq, Libya, Morocco, Tunisia, Mauritania and Egypt.

Health Ministry issues rules for admission to University Hospital

AMMAN (Petra) — The Health Ministry Sunday issued new regulations governing admission to the University of Jordan Hospital in accordance with an agreement concluded between the ministry and the hospital last month.

Under the new regulations, patients covered by medical insurance can be transferred to the University Hospital by the Ministry of Health or the body he designates to act on his behalf in this respect, or by specialist doctors working in other hospitals after filling in referral forms and having them officially sealed.

Patients can also be referred to the University Hospital by specialist doctors working in comprehensive health centres, after having approval from the centre's director.

People unable to cover the expenses of their treatment will be referred to the hospital after studying their social situation, provided that they are in possession of a report from a specialist doctor, saying that treatment facilities are not available at the ministry's hospitals.

The regulations cited the non-availability of treatment facilities at the ministry's hospitals or the need for specialised treatment which is not provided at the ministry's hospitals, as reasons for referral.

Under the agreement, a subscriber to the medical insurance plan or any beneficiary who comes at the University Hospital directly without any referral shall pay almost 30 per cent of the medical treatment costs.

Subscribers and beneficiaries covered by medical insurance under the first category, can go to the University of Jordan Hospital directly without any prior referral, the agreement said.

Conference to review Arab countries' issues

AMMAN (Petra) — A three-day pan-Arab conference on the state of Arab Nation and the challenges facing it starts here Monday.

Taking part in the conference are a number of Arab intellectuals and thinkers, who will also be discussing other issues including the economic impact of the Gulf crisis on Arab countries' human rights, Arab unity and solidarity.

They will also discuss two working papers on pan-Arab security and effects of world political order on it as well as the relation between national security and the situation in the various Arab countries.

The second working paper tackles such issues as constitutional and legal guarantees of human rights in the Arab countries.

The conference, which is the second of its kind, has become a yearly function designed to discuss the situation of the Arab Nation and its vital issues. The first conference was held in Tunis in March 1990.



Prime Minister Mudar Badran Sunday holds talks with Indonesian Trade Minister Arifin Siregar (Petra photo)

Jordan, Indonesia stress need to boost trade ties

AMMAN (Petra) — The visiting Indonesian trade minister Sunday lauded Jordan's stand vis-a-vis the Gulf crisis and said that it reflected far-sightedness and political wisdom that enabled the Kingdom to survive the crisis.

By adopting a neutral policy with regard to the Gulf crisis, Jordan has been able to protect its achievements and remain capable to pursue development, Mr. Arifin Siregar said at a meeting with Prime Minister Mudar Badran.

"Jordan's stand was based on His Majesty King Hussein's principles and policies which have guided the country since its establishment," the prime minister replied.

Mr. Badran also lauded Jordanian-Indonesian relations and stressed the need for the two countries to open the way for further bolstering relations through business and trade and exchange of visits by Indonesian and Jordanian businessmen, and organising trade fairs.

The Indonesian trade minister voiced his country's appreciation of the Jordanian government for allowing it the opportunity to display samples of its products in Amman, opening the way for bolstering bilateral trade and exchange of expertise in industry, for discussing joint ventures in food processing and the manufacture of iron, steel and fertilisers.

The two sides emphasised the need to promote Indonesian trade in the Arab region and in Europe, through Jordan, which, they said, has a unique geographic location in the Middle East area.

The Indonesian minister earlier had talks on bilateral trade with Minister of Industry and Trade Ziyad Fariz who welcomed the delegation's visit as an important step on the road to increase the volume of trade and to bolster bilateral relations.

"Indonesian investors can benefit from opportunities available in Jordan and can launch joint industrial ventures with Jordanian businessmen in the free zones," said Mr. Fariz at the meeting attended by the Indonesian delegation members and Jordanian officials.

"Indonesians can also launch ventures on their own and can benefit from Jordan's economic and trade agreements with other Arab countries to which they can sell their national products," Mr. Fariz added.

Mr. Siregar said his delegation was impressed by Jordan's development and the infrastructure available for economic and trade operations and industry. His visits to the Arab Potash Company and the Port of Aqaba Saturday, the minister said, enhanced his belief that the Kingdom possesses great import, export and trade potentials.

"Numerous opportunities exist for promoting trade and increasing imports and exports between Indonesia and Jordan, and the delegation's current visit gave the Indonesians a good idea about the types of products that can be exchanged with the Jordanian market," Mr. Siregar said.

After the official meeting, the Indonesian delegation members heard a detailed briefing on Jordan's economy, the Kingdom's trade with European, Asian and Arab countries and losses sustained as a result of the Gulf crisis which, according to the officials, reached \$1.5 billion.

The Jordanian side attending the meeting included the directors of the Jordan Phosphate Mines Company, the Arab Potash Company and president of the Amman Chamber of Industry and ministry officials.

Finance Minister Basel Jaraneh met the Indonesian trade minister to discuss financial procedures to settle trade between Indonesia and Jordan.

Later Mr. Jaraneh told the Jordan News Agency, Petra, that the two sides had reviewed ways of increasing the volume of trade and developing economic and financial cooperation. The two sides he said, also discussed prospects for Indonesian businessmen benefiting from Jordan's free zone in Aqaba where Indonesia can make use of the warehouses for various commodities en route for sale in other countries.

Fair aims at boosting volume of trade between Jordan and Indonesia

By Maha Addasi
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — The visiting Indonesian trade delegation Sunday displayed samples of their national products at the Marriott Hotel and met with Jordanian businessmen interested in their products as a way of increasing the volume of trade between Indonesia and Jordan.

Indonesian manufacturers, traders and company owners specialising in plywood, coffee, tea, textiles, shoes, and steel, among other things, participated in this exhibition.

Many Indonesian traders were encouraged by the turnout of businessmen from Jordan. "We came here not knowing what to expect as this is the first such Indonesian delegation to Jordan," the president of a company specialising in selling coffee and spices said.

"After today's exhibition I am pleasantly surprised by the number of Jordanians who are seriously interested in trade with Indonesia," he added.

According to Director of Directorate for Foreign Trade Relations Gofar Bain, who is also secretary of the trade mission, the volume of trade between Jordan and Indonesia is not very large, but that volume does not reflect the full trade potential between the two countries.

He added that Indonesia mostly imported phosphate and potash from Jordan and expressed hope that other products could be traded between the two countries, citing textiles, and palm oil as possibilities.

Jordanian traders showed a great deal of interest in textiles in the trade exhibition. "I am very impressed by the genuine interest that traders are taking in clothing," Fatchiyah Ahmad, the director of a company specialising in textiles said.

At a press conference held by the Indonesian Minister of Trade Arifin M. Siregar at the Ministry of Trade and Industry Sunday, he expressed hope that the Indonesian companies could cooperate with Jordanian companies to export goods to neighbouring Arab countries, like Iraq, and also to the Gulf market as a whole.

"One Indonesian company is presently looking into renting a warehouse in Aqaba free zone in order to export Indonesian goods there and display them to Jordanians and to people from surrounding countries," Dr. Siregar said.

He continued saying that trade between Indonesia and Jordan had reached a volume of \$70 million, with Jordan exporting \$55 million. Dr. Siregar said that the time was ripe for increasing the volume of trade.

"In the past Indonesia emphasised on the Japanese, the United States and the European Community markets and it is time to diversify our markets," Dr. Siregar said.

"We want to increase trade both ways between Jordan and Indonesia. This mission is only the first step of introduction between the two countries in order for traders from the two countries to familiarise themselves with the trade potentials," Dr. Siregar said.

He added that Indonesia had adopted a policy to decrease its dependence on oil and gas. "In 1982 Indonesia's income from oil and gas made up 80 per cent. By 1990 only 40 per cent of income came from these sources," he said adding that this was a policy Indonesia would continue to adopt.

Minister warns of Israel's expansionist, Judaising plans

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs Ibrahim Kilani Sunday warned the Arabs of an Israeli plan to enlarge the perimeters of the greater Jerusalem area including the Arab part of the city which was illegally annexed after the 1967 war, and said that the plan envisaged the annexation of five Arab towns and hundreds of villages whose Arab population will be eventually evicted from their homeland.

Addressing a press conference, the minister described Israel's plot as a new provocative and arbitrary design aimed at Judaising further parts of the Holy Land.

"The expansion of the present boundaries of the Holy City is primarily aimed at forcing the Arab population to leave the holy places of Jerusalem, including Al Aqsa Mosque, so that no Arabs or Muslims can defend the holy shrine in case of future Israeli measures directed against the holy site," the minister said.

He said that this would be the first step towards Judaising the whole of Jerusalem, with all its holy sites, prior to demolishing Al Aqsa Mosque to reconstruct the Jewish temple in its place.

"The plan is in line with Israel's 1975 announcement of its intention to build the so-called greater Jerusalem, a plot which first entails driving out the inhabitants of Al Aizerieh, Abu Dees, Hay Al Raam, Beer Nabala and other Arab districts adjoining the Holy City," the minister said at the press conference.

"Once the annexation plans are implemented, the Arab inhabitants will be faced with heavy taxes which would eventually force them to abandon their homes and lands," Dr. Kilani pointed out.

He reminded his audience of Israel's 1969 burning of Al Aqsa Mosque and noted that the ongoing excavations under the mosque were designed to help the Israelis achieve their dreams of demolishing the shrine to pave the way for the Jewish temple.

Dr. Kilani gave details about the Israeli plan and said it entailed expanding Jerusalem from the village of Sinjel, in the occupied Arab territories, just north of Ramallah in the north, to the village of Beit Fajjar, near Hebron in the south.

He said the whole annex would be something like 45 kilometres from north to south and 15 kilometres from east to west, with a total area of around 446,000 dunums.

According to the minister, the plan would encompass Ramallah, Al Birah, Bethlehem, Beit Jala and Beit Sahour towns along with 45 Arab villages strewn all around these towns in the West Bank.

"The most sinister aim of the whole plan is the eviction of 250,000 Arab inhabitants from these areas to be replaced by around 100,000 Jewish settlers, thus raising by three-fold the present number of settlers in the Arab areas," Dr. Kilani pointed out.

The minister appealed to the



Ibrahim Kilani

leaders of Arab and Islamic nations to save Al Aqsa Mosque and the other Islamic holy shrines from the looming danger.

Minister Kilani said that the recent transfer of Ethiopian Jews to occupied Palestine and the ongoing process of Soviet and other European Jewish migration to Palestine constituted a first step aimed at establishing the so-called greater Israel in the Arab region.

"A great number of the new comers are now being settled in Arab areas, a process which provides evidence that the Israelis will never pull out from the occupied Arab lands," he said.

Addressing the press conference was Fayez Jaber, the secretary general of the Royal Commission on Jerusalem Affairs, who pointed out that the Israeli colonies established Arab land are now estimated at 286, and on the increase, in total defiance of U.N. resolutions.

APU meeting emphasises need to support, assist Palestinians

AMMAN (Petra) — An Arab Parliamentary Union (APU) meeting, which was concluded in Tripoli, Libya, Sunday, passed a number of resolutions and recommendations aimed at ending differences among Arab countries and paving the ground for Arab solidarity, according to Parliament Speaker Abdul Latif Arabiyat who took part in the meetings.

"The parliamentarians emphasised the need for the Arab countries to provide support and assistance to the Palestinian people under occupation to help them resist Israel's practices and maintain their steadfastness," Dr. Arabiyat noted in a statement to Radio Jordan.

He said that the APU called on the Arab League to speed up the implementation of all Arab summit resolutions and to introduce badly needed amendments to the Arab League statute in order to enhance the process of Arab unity.

Dr. Arabiyat said that the parliamentarians called on the Arab countries to work out unified and concerted strategies designed to restore inter-Arab confidence and pave the way for erasing the negative traces of the Gulf war.

Furthermore, the parliamentarians voiced absolute support for the Palestinians' intifada and considered the Palestine problem as the central issue for the Arab World, requiring further joint efforts to support the Palestinian efforts for freedom, Dr. Arabiyat said.

He said the Arab parliamentarians urged Arab governments to give the Palestine question priority over all other issues at the International Parliamentary Union (IPU) meetings, where, he said, the Arabs should demand a denunciation of Israel's practices and illegal actions.

Dr. Arabiyat said that the APU meeting also dwelt on the Lebanese question, with emphasis on that country's independence and territorial sovereignty and integrity, and voiced concern over the situation in Somalia where the inhabitants are facing civil strife.

He said that the parliamentarians urged Arab countries to provide all possible assistance to the Somali people.

Conference to endorse the national charter

AMMAN (J.T.) — A national conference to endorse the national charter will be held in Amman on June 9 and His Majesty King Hussein will deliver a nationwide address on the occasion, according to an announcement by Ahmad Obeidat, chairman of the Royal Commission entrusted with drawing up the charter.



Ahmad Obeidat

The coming conference, Mr. Obeidat said in a statement to the Jordan News Agency, Petra, will be attended by representatives of various local organisations and invited heads of different political and social groups in the country who will endorse the charter.

The 60-member Royal Commission was entrusted in April 1990 to draw up the national charter which would regulate political life in the country; the commission finalised work on the charter draft last December before it was presented to King Hussein.

Mr. Obeidat had said that the charter emphasised the identity of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan and provided for concepts and principles that can pave the way for political pluralism, which, in turn, can enhance the concept of law domination and safeguard human rights and public liberties.

Mr. Obeidat told Al Dustour daily Sunday that he expected 2,000 personalities to attend the national conference which would hold a general discussion on the charter before its approval.

Asked why it took so long to convene the national conference to endorse the national charter, Mr. Obeidat attributed the delay to the political and military events that occurred during 1990. "Jordan was never in isolation from these serious developments, and it was neither practical nor reasonable to convene such an important national conference amidst the dangerous situation facing the Arab region," Mr. Obeidat added.

Asked if the coming national conference would debate the various articles of the charter or just endorse its general ideas, Mr. Obeidat said that it was not possible to have such a conference in detail what the Royal Commission had approved. "Two thousand people can not possibly be asked to return to square one and start discussing the charter right from the start as this is only a waste of time," Mr. Obeidat noted.

He said that the Royal Commission had discussed every detail of the charter before approving a final version that was submitted to the King and the charter could now serve as an important tool for further development in the Kingdom.

Mr. Obeidat noted that the charter contained principles and controls for future political parties in Jordan which would be functioning within the framework of the Jordanian constitution. He said that the government also had its own views and any decision on political parties could be based on benefits from experiments in other Arab countries.

To carry out its task, the commission members were grouped in five committees discussing a range of issues including politics, education, culture, economic and social affairs as well as Jordanian-Palestinian relations.

After finalising the charter's draft, King Hussein met with the commission members and described the charter as the foundation and springboard for the nation's various forces towards the fulfilment of national aspirations.

Democracy, said the King, cannot be complete without pluralism which can be exercised under the umbrella of a national charter backed by the people and in an atmosphere of free competition among various political groups in a drive to provide service to the homeland and to ensure its progress.

Jordan to attend Rome meeting

AMMAN (Petra) — Jordan will take part in the annual meeting of the International Fund for Agricultural Development's Board of Governors, which will be held in Rome, Wednesday.

Participants will discuss at the two-day meeting problems facing the agricultural sector in developing countries and means of addressing such problems.

They will also discuss issues pertaining to world food security, means of addressing the population growth problems and providing sufficient food to the people all over the world.

The Jordanian delegation will be headed by Planning Minister Khalid Amin Abdullah.

HOME NEWS IN BRIEF

Minister to announce awards regulations

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Culture and Youth Khaled Al Karaki Monday holds a press conference at the Hussein Youth City during which he will talk about the regulations governing nomination for winning the state meritorious awards, as approved by the Cabinet. The awards are usually awarded on Nov. 14 of each year, to coincide with His Majesty King Hussein's birthday.

JTV opens studio in Maan

MAAN (Petra) — Jordan Television has opened a studio in Maan with staff to conduct coverage of events in the south. A Radio and Television Corporation official said that Maan was chosen because it acquires a central position within the southern regions and because the city played a leading role in the Great Arab Revolt.

IOM repatriates 40,774 in May

AMMAN (J.T.) — The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has just released an update for its operations and released details about financial pledges contributing to its humanitarian missions. Press release said that as of April 30 IOM had assisted a total of 40,774 persons to return to their countries of origin. These included Egyptians, Sudanese, Vietnamese, Indians, Yemenis, Iraqis and Iranians. Repatriation movements, the release said, took place principally from Jordan. By the end of last month, it added, IOM had received pledges of \$19 million, against which \$16.6 million had been received.

WHAT'S GOING ON

The following listings are compiled from monthly bulletins and the daily Arabic press. Readers are advised to verify the listed time and place with the concerned institutions.

EXHIBITION

★ Exhibition of etchings, lithographs and monographs, by Ahmad Nawash and Yasser Duweik at Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation (10 a.m. — 5 p.m.)

FASHION SHOW

★ Fashion show and display of silver accessories by Hana Sadeq Berando at the Plaza Hotel. The show includes top quality local products made in traditional styles of the rich Jordanian culture.

FILM

★ French film entitled "La Vie de Famille" at the French Cultural Centre — 8:00 p.m.

Education system needs improving, revision — minister

AMMAN (Petra) — Minister of Education Abdullah Al Akaileh admitted Sunday that the education system in Jordan was basically weak and said that the country was in need of a comprehensive revision of its educational system from the primary stage to the university stage.

"The Ministry of Education is currently trying to improve the situation by overcoming points of weakness in the education-learning process, and is following new guidelines and principles to achieve that goal," Mr. Akaileh said.

Addressing a meeting of directors of government schools in the Amman area, Mr. Akaileh said that one way towards improvement would be a real appraisal of the teachers' performance in schools. He said the ministry had adopted a new mechanism for such evaluation through constant visits to the schools by the directors of education and educational supervisors.

"This year will witness the birth of a new educational curriculum for the first, fifth and ninth grades and the ministry plans to apply the curriculum at the beginning of the coming scholastic year," said Mr. Akaileh at the meeting which also reviewed matters related to general school examinations and transfers of teachers for the coming scholastic year.

"There is need for an administrative reform to go hand in hand with the ministry's plan for educational development," said the minister.

The minister also announced that plans were evaluation for holding intensive training courses for teachers, by the end of July, to train at least 500 men and women educational and schools supervisors.

Jordan Times

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Deportees Vs. immigrants: 4 out, 15,000 come in

ON THE surface it would seem reassuring that the U.N. Security Council has unanimously deplored Israel's expulsion of four Palestinians and demanded their return. After all this time around the council's decision was not only wholeheartedly supported by Washington but also vindicated by it after describing Tel Aviv's deportation of the Palestinians as a clear violation of the Fourth Geneva Convention. Yet till this point in time, Israel got away with murder after repeatedly ignoring such U.N. Security Council resolutions on identical and similar subjects. Only last December, the council condemned Israel for deporting two Palestinians and demanded their repatriation. Also in January of this year, the council censured the Zionist state for deporting four more Palestinians and also called for their immediate return. Altogether, more than 66 Palestinians had been exiled from their homeland by Israel since the beginning of the Palestinian uprising in December of 1987.

The question that poses itself on this latest occasion to incriminate Israel for flouting the Geneva Conventions especially the Fourth one is whether this time the U.N. and with the U.S. blessings will make a more earnest effort to have its many resolutions on Israel honoured and implemented. The PLO's deputy representative to the U.N. in New York summed it up well when he asked the members of the council during its deliberations that if it was unable to compel Israel to implement its resolutions on Palestinian deportees what chances were there that it could ever succeed in compelling it to withdraw from Arab territories occupied in 1967.

At a time when the international community is calling on the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict to take confidence-building measures as a prelude to the much acclaimed peace conference on the Middle East, Israel must be allowed to get away with murder again. The Arab side has repeatedly charged that the major powers have been applying double standards in their pursuits to resolve the conflicts of the area. How many more Security Council resolutions need to be adopted before Washington and its allies could be moved to take through the U.N. system more forceful actions against Israel for rejecting U.N. resolutions.

And is it coincidental that Washington's overt support for the latest resolution on Palestinian deportees was coupled with its more latent decision to lend a helping hand in the airlifting of thousands of Falashas from Ethiopia to Israel over the last few days? Is it not legitimate to question whether the motivation behind the support for Friday's resolution was to sugar-coat the more potent U.S. resolution that aimed to transfer thousands of new Jews to Israel, especially at a time when the Israeli settlement policy is rhetorically dubbed in Washington as the largest obstacle to peace in the Middle East? The only effective way to rebut such charges and allay such fears and suspicions is to see Washington and its allies in the Security Council take more tangible measures with a view to making Israel heed U.N. resolutions on the Palestinian deportees as well as on all other issues related to the Arab-Israeli conflict.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

THE United States airlifting of 18,000 Jews from Ethiopia to occupied Palestine came under heavy criticism by the Al Ra'i Arabic daily Sunday. This action suggests that Washington has had a direct role in facilitating the movement of Jews from Ethiopia to the occupied territories; and this gives rise to questions about whether Washington is really opposed to Israel's settlement policies, said Al Ra'i. It should be noted that Israel had rejected James Baker's criticism of its settlement policies, and announced that it would continue rejecting America's stand in this regard, the paper noted. It should also be noted that by helping Israel to transfer the Ethiopian Jews, Washington is helping the Zionist state to beef up its settlements in the occupied Arab lands and encouraging it to hold on to the Arab territory, regardless of the United Nations resolutions. Washington's seeming opposition to Israel's settlement policies through mere statements and empty words, is in reality an American manoeuvre, because one can see that the U.S. administration is openly helping the Israelis to acquire human resources to build more settlements on Arab land, the paper pointed out. It said such double-faced policies adopted by the U.S. administration can only give further encouragement to the Israelis to be more adamant in their attitude, and can create concern among the Arabs who are in real doubt about America's credibility.

A columnist in Savi Al Shaab daily believes that Israel will soon be faced with two options: to wage a war on Syria and Lebanon for reaching a formula on unity, which the Israelis believe detrimental to their existence, or succumb to Washington's peace efforts and accept Baker's peace initiative. Salameh Ekor says that a delay by the U.S. administration to send Baker again to the Middle East region on a new shuttle diplomacy does not mean that President Bush had given up on the peace process. He says that Bush will resort to tactics with the hope to exercise some pressure on the Jewish state because he realises that only if peace is achieved he would be re-elected for another term in office and not because he had won a war on Iraq. The writer also believes that Bush looked the other way when the Syrians and Lebanese concluded their treaty for the dual purpose of trying to bribe Damascus to remain true to the Baker's initiative and to exercise pressure on Tel Aviv. The writer also believes that Washington's acceptance of the European Community's participation in the peace process was another form of pressure on Israel because the Europeans had voiced their dismay over Israel's policies. Ekor believes that the Israelis will eventually comply with Washington's wish and then Baker would resume his mission in the area.

Weekly Political Pulse

Legitimate Arab concerns

ISRAELI Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir has been quoted as saying that "Resolution 242 contains no hint at all of slogans such as 'territory for peace', or 'withdrawal on all fronts'." U.S. Secretary of State James Baker was also quoted as saying that Israel does share the Arab interpretation of Security Council Resolution 242 and, therefore, it was up to the parties to negotiate among themselves on the full legal and political import of 242! Of the two remarks about what Resolution 242 actually means and stands for Baker's call for a negotiated interpretation of the resolution appears to be the more ominous.

Tel Aviv has always been on record as defining the resolution in question in a manner consistent with its scheme to hold on to the Arab territories captured in the 1967 war. On that score, Shamir's government already declared in the most solemn and official manner possible that his country has already met the demand to withdraw from Arab territories as called for in 242 by relinquishing Sinai to Egypt. It also adheres very religiously to the notion that 242 calls for withdrawal of Israel from "Arab territories" rather than from "the Arab territories." No wonder then Shamir is adamant about rejecting any meaningful role for the U.N. Security Council in any projected talks between it and its neighbouring Arab parties.

So there is nothing new about Israel's intentions. What is really new and disturbing is Washington's apparent belief that it is to the parties to the Arab-Israeli conflict to interpret the U.N. Security Council resolutions on the Middle East rather than the Council itself. This is indeed a novel idea that runs counter to the established jurisprudence of the Security Council which till this point in time has always regarded itself as the sole organ capable of defining its own resolutions. This creeping novelty may also shed light on why Syria in particular is trying to safeguard the role of the U.N. in any conference and is religiously defending that role. If the parties to the Middle East conflicts have now the mandate to construe resolutions 242 and 338 on their own, then obviously the U.N. Security Council has a very little role left to

perform in the quest for peace in the Middle East.

Israel, at least with Shamir at the helm, seeks to undermine Resolution 242 and make it of marginal relevance to the anticipated negotiations with the Arab side. Israel obviously seeks to regard 242 only as a guiding principle, more of a recommendation than a binding instrument with fixed legal dimensions. It knows only too well that when challenged on the interpretation of that resolution, the Security Council would most probably support the Arab thesis that the resolution calls for a complete Israeli withdrawal from all the Arab territories. Freed from U.N. pressure, Israel feels that it can succeed in negotiating the terms of peace in the area on the basis of power politics rather than on the foundation of international norms and legitimacy. Damascus seeks to sound the alarm about the trap being set up for the Arab side and therefore feels more secure if the presence of the U.N. is more felt in any futuristic negotiations with Israel.

There is little doubt that the Arab side has lost much of its bargaining strength in the aftermath of the Gulf War. The much heralded quest for a strategic balance with Israel has also gone down the drain. Left on their own, the Arab parties would be easy prey to Israel. The only way to rescue the Arabs on the negotiating table is to secure a pivotal role for the U.N. Security Council. This is essentially the Syrian perspective.

On the other hand, Damascus may not want to stay aloof from any projected peace conference even if held under imperfect conditions because it knows that when left alone, its bargaining position would deteriorate much more than it already has and that it may not be able to salvage its posture on the Golan Heights, Lebanon or any other dimension connected to the Arab-Israeli conflicts.

In the final analysis the crux of the matter is whether a semblance of unity can be maintained within the Arab ranks prior to holding such a peace conference. Even more relevant is whether Arab unity can be maintained during the negotiating

process with Israel, with or without U.N. participation. Not surprisingly, Syria prefers one Arab negotiating party rather than two or three as Israel would prefer, for the simple reason of safeguarding one unified Arab front throughout the negotiating process. By making the success of one Arab party's negotiation with Tel Aviv contingent on the success of the other, Syria would feel more secure that it would not be left out at one stage or another after the negotiations get really going.

In retrospect, much more pressing than the role of the U.N. in the peace conference is the ability to cement a unified Arab posture throughout the negotiating process with Israel. There is now fear that Arab unity may crumble and buckle under as soon as each Arab party is left on its own to salvage its own situation. This would be an overriding Israeli objective for this possibility offers it opportunities that may not exist otherwise. One would hope therefore that at least a mini-Arab summit be held as soon as possible to consolidate the Arab ranks on the eve of the convening of the peace conference under the auspices of the two superpowers. Such an Arab summit must at least strive to guarantee an important role for the European Community if all fails and the U.N. Security Council is left out. A regional conference on the Arab-Israeli conflicts under the auspices of Washington, Moscow and Brussels should be the minimum acceptable condition for the Arab side. The EC countries have a greater vested interest in peace in the Middle East than the other regions of the world and its participation in the upcoming conference must be made a condition. A strong argument can also be made in support of integrating Japan into the peace process since it too has emerged as a regional power with real interests in the preservation of peace and security in the area. So if a critical role for the U.N. cannot be achieved, let's at least invite the EC countries and Japan to have a presence in it. This should be the Arab alternative position in the face of Tel Aviv's rejection of any important role for the U.N. system in the search for a permanent and just resolution of the Arab-Israeli conflicts.

By Waleed Sadi

American options on Palestine

By Mouin Rabbani

THE decisive military victory of the United States in the Gulf war is widely seen as a mortal blow to the Palestinians and an unprecedented boon for Israel. There is much to be said for this point of view; while the moral arguments advanced have no basis in fact, and while morality will in any case be swept aside by *raison d'etat*, it is true that Washington's autocratic Arab partners are unstable regimes and are simply too weak to unilaterally preserve Western interests. On this basis, the Bush administration may well conclude that Israel is an even more vital strategic asset than it has been in the past.

According to this scenario, an economically weakened United States, incapable of repeating a massive and sustained overseas military deployment, will revert to an updated version of the Nixon Doctrine. The practical consequences for the Palestinians are seen as the elimination of the PLO as a potential partner for negotiations, to be replaced by a Syrian, then Jordanian, and ultimately an alternative Palestinian option: massive subsidies for Soviet Jewish settlement in the occupied territories; and a *carte blanche* for Israel to deal with the *intifada* in the manner it sees fit.

The unipolar world

While such interpretations may hold true for the short term, they fail to take account of several factors. As a result of the Soviet Union's collapse, the United States has become the first truly global imperial power. It inhabits, and perceives itself to inhabit, a unipolar world. Furthermore, the Gulf crisis, successfully concluded at such low cost (perhaps even a net profit) in American terms, has reinforced this unipolar mentality with a belief that America is more a superpower than a global policeman needing regional lieutenants. A protracted and costly American engagement in the Middle East would clearly have been of greater benefit to Israel.

Israel has also been marginalised in two other ways. Firstly, its strategic value during the Gulf

war, potentially positive in the event of a wider conflagration, was ultimately negative. Not only were its services never required, but Israel was also the obvious fuse for a regional war the United States desperately sought to avoid. And secondly, it is precisely a chastened American economy which may seek to decrease massive subsidies to Israel (such as the \$13 billion grant requested for reconstruction costs and Soviet Jewish settlement) and increase the more profitable loans, investments and sales to the Arab World.

Israel: an asset or a burden?
It is therefore not unreasonable to suppose that the United States,

"In other words, Washington appears to be entering an era in which the Arab-Israeli conflict is viewed as a burden rather than an asset to its regional aspirations. Arab-Israeli tension, in the past consistently viewed as an instrument with which to blunt the threats to Gulf oil supplies arising from their northern tier at a time when the Cold War made unilateral American military intervention difficult, appears now to be seen as both unnecessary and potentially dangerous, in that such tension in and of itself constitutes a potential threat to the stability of Gulf oil supplies. If this reading of the 'new order' in the Middle East is correct, developments can be expected to be helped along by an increasingly assertive European foreign policy."

a shrinking economic power at the apex of its global military might, will seek to defuse potential threats to its interests before it becomes unable to confront them on its own terms at some point in the future.

In other words, Washington appears to be entering an era in which the Arab-Israeli conflict is viewed as a burden rather than an asset to its regional aspirations. Arab-Israeli tension, in the past consistently viewed as an instrument with which to blunt the threats to Gulf oil supplies arising from their northern tier at a time when the cold war made unilateral American military intervention difficult, appears now to be seen as both unnecessary and potentially dangerous, in that such tension in and of itself constitutes a potential threat to the stability of Gulf oil supplies. If this reading

of the "new order" in the Middle East is correct, developments can be expected to be helped along by an increasingly assertive European foreign policy.

Israel's loss will not, however, immediately translate into the Palestinians' gain. Rather, Washington will continue to pursue its rejectionist policies of seeking another Camp David and creating an alternative Palestinian leadership. The immediate beneficiaries will, therefore, be the Arab regimes which allied themselves to America in the Gulf crisis, such as Syria, and those, like Jordan, who are returning to its fold. The Palestinians, for their part, can reasonably expect unprecedented press-

ure on the PLO as a viable political entity.

Palestinian alternatives?

The problem for Washington's scenario, ironically, is that Palestine is not yet a state possessing an effective coercive apparatus and it is therefore impossible to impose a compliant dictatorship on the Palestinian people. Because any Palestinian representation must derive its will from the people for its concessions to have practical consequence, Messrs. Bush and Baker are left in the unenviable position of choosing between the PLO which they seek to eliminate and an Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) which will have nothing to do with them. (The other alternatives, Abu Nidal's Fateh Revolutionary Council and the Abu

Musa/Khalid Al Fuhum group recently rehabilitated by Washington's Arab coalition partners, are also unlikely candidates). In the end, therefore, a new and more substantive dialogue between the United States and the conservative wing of the PLO is a very real possibility.

It should also be remembered that the Gulf war has in Arab eyes severely compromised what little legitimacy the anti-Iraqi Arab regimes retained after a decade of domestic repression and pro-Western servility since Camp David and the Iranian revolution. Thus, as the recent release of Palestinian political prisoners by Syria and the embryonic Egyptian-Palestinian rapprochement would appear to portend, Washington's Arab partners will muster any leverage with Washington they possess to hasten a just resolution of the Palestine question. In doing so, they hope to contain popular pressure for change and recoup that minimum degree of legitimacy necessary for stability at home. Whether a just Arab-Israeli peace will indeed deflect pressures for democratisation and official accountability is an open question; the point is that it is seen as doing so by those seeking to prevent genuine reform.

It would be premature to speculate as to whether the political settlement envisaged by Washington will carry within it the seeds of a historic compromise, further conflict, or a second Palestinian civil war. Israel's capacity to unilaterally wreck the prospects for peace and provoke another Arab-Israeli war in explicit opposition to American policy is another unknown factor, although the 1956 Suez crisis offers a useful historical precedent. All that is certain is that if U.S. interests do indeed dictate an Arab-Israeli settlement but fail to provide for Palestinian self-determination, a protracted era of upheaval in the Middle East is already on the horizon.

Mouin Rabbani a former researcher for Al Haq in Ramallah is now at Durham University. His article is reprinted from the London-based Middle East International.

Jordan's unique position, role

By Lyl Harding

JORDAN'S geopolitical position and unique role in the context of the exigencies of the Arab-Israeli conflict have subjected the Kingdom to different economic, political and social pressures over the years. This has required a high degree of political awareness and manoeuvrability on the part of Jordan's leadership, in order to face the different challenges, and still be able to pursue the path of political, economic and social development.

Indeed, since the creation of the state, and in a far more pronounced manner since the 1967 conflict, the leadership of Jordan has had to operate on three different political levels. The first of these levels is the internal one, where a fast growing population has grappled with a major socio-economic transformation to modernity in an extremely conservative society.

Significant successes in the fields of education and social development have been achieved, creating a highly politically aware society that had its first experience of democracy less than two years ago. The second level is the regional context, largely determined by the Palestine problem and its centrality to the Arab-Israeli conflict. Jordan's unique geopolitical position and social composition gives this regional context a primary position in terms of its effect on the domestic and foreign policies pursued by the Kingdom. The ever-shifting alliances in inter-Arab relations which have dictated the fate of the Arab system, as it emerged, at least since the end of the World War II, have created constant pressures on a state that has relied for its economic survival on aid granted by Arab oil-producing countries, and on the repatriations of Jordanian nationals working in the Gulf.

The third level is the international level where Jordan has played an important role in terms of its moderate stands vis-a-vis regional issues.

During the "Second Cold

War," Jordan's western orientation, yet non-aligned position, placed it under tremendous pressuring forces that to different degrees placed it in opposition internal and regional currents.

One could understand the different pressures operating on the different levels when the play of events during the Gulf crisis is reviewed.

One can now see the political awareness and flexibility of Jordan's leadership, in the aftermath of the Gulf crisis, by reviewing the address of His Majesty King Hussein at the graduation ceremony of the Royal War College in Amman on Wednesday May 22, King Hussein's support for the American initiative to convene a peace conference that would pave the way for Arab-Israeli negotiations is not only based on the principled positions adopted by the Jordanian foreign policies, but also on a correct reading and analysis of the new international order, and the new regional consideration.

By basing Jordan's acceptance on resolutions 242 and 338, the legitimate political rights of the Palestinian people and the right of Israel to live within secure boundaries, King Hussein has applied the same standard championed by the U.S. in its handling of the Gulf crisis to the Palestine problem and the Arab-Israeli conflict.

This proves that the King's awareness of the determinants and constraints of the different levels, internal, regional and international, has created a harmony among the common grounds found in all three levels to give an impetus to the current peace moves. When Jordan's unique position is placed in juxtaposition to the flexible policies pursued, as the King's address shows, one can appreciate the principles on which the foreign policy of Jordan are based.

Perhaps it would be wiser for western leaders to appreciate the determinants of Jordan's policies and assist in applying international legitimacy to an area where justice has been delayed for a very long period of time.

Dark days of Soviet winter melt into springtime optimism

By Bryan Brunley
The Associated Press

MOSCOW — A long Soviet political winter has ended, giving way to lilac blossoms and hopes of reform, help from the West and a lasting political truce between Mikhail Gorbachev and Boris Yeltsin.

Gorbachev has adopted a policy of conciliation and compromise, turning away from the hard line that produced the crackdowns against the Baltic republics and the press last winter.

No one knows what lies ahead. But the foreboding of January is giving way to the realisation that Soviet reformers have withstood a severe challenge from Communist Party traditionalists.

"There will be no military coup. There will be no civil war," sociologist Lilia Shevtsova wrote in a sober assessment of the domestic scene.

Most Soviets seemed resigned to the collapse of the old order

and nearly everyone agrees that things will get worse before they get better, she wrote in the government newspaper *Izvestia*.

But the "black colonels" and Communist Party traditionalists who pressured Gorbachev into putting the brakes on economic reform last September, and are blamed for the bloodletting in the Baltics, are giving way to pragmatists from the industrial sector, the party and the new generation of reformers.

Gorbachev, who in February stood nearly alone in a deeply divided society, has rebuilt his bastion in the political centre and is asserting himself again in international politics, where he has been most successful in the past.

A team of three prominent Soviets is due at the White House on Monday seeking to persuade president George Bush to let Gorbachev attend a summit of

the Group of Seven industrialised nations in London in mid-July.

Gorbachev's top foreign policy adviser, Yevgeny Primakov, Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Shcherbakov, and an erstwhile adviser to Yeltsin, Grigory Yavlinsky, have been lobbying the West to pump billions of dollars into the Soviet economy.

Gorbachev has implied that the West should be willing to spend as much propping up the Soviet economy as it did waging war with Iraq.

But western officials say money is scarce and that their aim is to support reforms to the Soviet system, not to preserve it. Bush has said that Gorbachev might be invited to the G-7 meeting in London if it would help Soviet reforms.

U.S. officials involved in the dialogue are wary that Gorbachev could back away from radical reforms, as he did last September, and that his month-old truce with Yeltsin could

crumble. "Political marriages in this country seem to last about a month and a half. They could roll back at any time," said one U.S. official, who spoke on condition that he not be further identified.

But, the official said, Gorbachev "seems to have crossed a threshold" with the "one-plus-nine" agreement that he reached on April 23 with Yeltsin, Kazakh President Nursultan Nazarbayev and the leaders of seven other of the 15 Soviet republics.

The same group, minus the president of Uzbekistan, met again Friday to flesh out the agreement. The deal calls for leaders of the nine republics to sign Gorbachev's union treaty to preserve the nation as a federation. In return, Gorbachev agreed to hand over most of the nation's natural and industrial resources.

The immediate effect of the agreement was to allow Gorbachev to fight off a challenge

from Communist Party traditionalists and to end a two-month-long coal strike, whose leaders had been calling for his resignation.

Although immediate fears of social and economic collapse faded with the end of the coal strike, the tension remains, a source close to Gorbachev acknowledged.

"It's quiet now, but things could heat up" as the June 12 date of the Russian presidential election draws near, said the source, speaking on condition he not be further identified. Yeltsin is a clear favourite in the race for the newly strengthened post. But two of Gorbachev's close allies are in the field of six, threatening to split the vote and force a run-off. That might delay or prevent Yeltsin from assuming the powerful post, which he could use to hurry the pace of reform.

Tension continues as well in the six republics that are refusing

to sign the union treaty, the three Baltic states of Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia, Moldavia in the far west, and Armenia and Georgia in the Caucasus mountains.

Soviet "black beret" commandos conducted a series of raids in Lithuania and Latvia on Friday, taking control of border points claimed by those secessionist governments.

And Soviet army, interior ministry and KGB troops were conducting operations to disarm Armenian guerrillas on Armenian-Azerbaijan border.

Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosian has accused the Kremlin of trying to force ethnic Armenians in Azerbaijan to flee across the border because Azerbaijan has agreed to sign Gorbachev's union treaty and Armenia has refused.

The Kremlin has retreated from its bold displays of military force during the winter, but the undercurrent of violence continues.

مركزنا من الأصل

Regional agenda fades as coalition falls asunder

By Hella Pick

THE ambitious agenda outlined by the victorious allies at the end of the Gulf war — an effective security system for the Gulf region; an Arab-Israeli settlement; a regional arms control regime; measures to reduce economic disparity in the Middle East — is, less than three months later, proving a mirage, disappearing in the old quicksands of Middle East politics.

The coalition itself has turned out to be much more an ad hoc affair than had been realised. The Arab members quietly peeled off when the U.S., Britain, and some of their West European allies decided to send their forces into northern Iraq to build havens for the Kurdish refugees.

The Soviet Union, although cooperating with the U.S. in pressing for Arab-Israeli negotiations, has also distanced itself from the safe haven enterprise.

The Arab section of the coalition has lost its coherence, and old tensions are resurfacing. Syria

and Egypt have again emerged at opposite ends of the political spectrum in the Arab-Israeli conflict; relations between Saudi Arabia and Egypt are uneasy; Kuwait is increasingly isolated as misgivings grow about the emir's handling of the war's aftermath.

But the crucial test for the cohesion of the coalition had to be the ability to confront the post-war agenda. The results, so far, are meagre.

A new security system is under discussion, but it exists more on paper than in reality. The Gulf Cooperation Council has had two planning meetings: in March in Damascus, where a ringing declaration of intention was issued, and more recently in Cairo, where the principles of solidarity were reiterated. But the practical follow-up so far has been negligible.

The Americans had assumed that Egyptian troops would form the core of a new Gulf security system. But Egyptian forces are being brought back from Saudi Arabia amid hints of disagree-

ment between the two countries and haggling over the payments that Egypt would receive for deploying them in Saudi Arabia. Iran, as a leading regional power, is demanding a role but is no closer to securing a place for itself in new Gulf security arrangements.

The U.S. secretary of defence, Richard Cheney, also learned during his recent trip that Saudi Arabia is stalling over U.S. and British offers to maintain arms stores for crisis use on Saudi soil.

None of the Gulf states have shown much interest in a European Community proposal to establish a Middle East conference on security and cooperation, modelled on Europe's CSCE process.

The U.S. effort to capitalise on the Gulf experience in pressing for an Arab-Israeli settlement is equally disappointing. Any credit that Israel built up during the Gulf war has been dissipated.

Gone is the "Scud factor" — the experience of Iraqi missiles directed at both Saudi Arabia and

Israel — which bracketed the two countries against a common danger and momentarily obscured their mutual antagonism. The window of opportunity is closed.

On economic regeneration, Saudi Arabia and the other oil-rich Gulf states are showing no inclination to promote a regional development bank or similar mechanism to spread wealth more evenly in the Middle East, or to foster social and economic development.

On regional arms control, President Bush is preparing a proposal under which chemical and other weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East would be scrapped, while Israel would be obliged to halt its production of nuclear fissile material, and all missile delivery systems with a range of more than 90 km would be banned.

But the Americans want to link this initiative with Arab-Israeli peace talks, and Mr. Bush has yet to decide whether it makes political sense to launch it in the absence of more progress on that front — The Guardian.



Experts believe wadis like this, that mostly end in the Jordan Valley, could be dammed and used to irrigate the desert during the dry months of summer

Experts advocate exploitation of desert, water running in wadis

By Nur Sati

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — By the year 2000, Jordanian experts estimate agricultural production will not be enough to meet local demand because of water shortage in the country and a swelling population. Unless new water resources are made available, most of the water normally used for the agricultural industry will be used for domestic consumption. One way out, experts advocate, is to direct agricultural activity from the Jordan Valley to the east and tap the rainfall that runs through the desert's valleys and wadis.

Jordan now meets just about 20 to 30 per cent (depending on the season) of the local demand for cereals, according to Dr. Awni Taimeh, soil and irrigation professor at the University of Jordan. The U.N. Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) estimate that figure will drop to 14 per cent by the end of the century.

Dr. Taimeh believes that a major hindrance to agricultural activity in the country is not salinity or foreign particles in the water, "because with the correct water treatment the soil can be treated." Rather it is land fragmentation, urban development on suitable agricultural land, desertification, the saturation of the Jordan Valley and the failure so far of collecting surface water that are blocking agricultural advancement.

Dr. Elias Salameh, director of the water and study centre at the University of Jordan maintains that, "it is well known that the productivity of land decreases when water salinity increases." Jordan's average salinity level, he explained, stands at 700 parts of dissolved parts per million (ppm). Although some vegetables can put up with a higher salinity level than others, "there will not be good production if the salinity level does not fall between the 400-700 ppm range."

At present, Dr. Salameh

said, "the salinity level at King Talal Dam's water has reached a high of 1,200 ppm because of the inflows of Khirbet Al Samra waste water treatment plant. This level cannot be tolerated."

Dr. Taimeh looks at the problem differently.

"These types of problems happen all the time in the agricultural field," he says. He explained that water pollutants are a temporary thing and "although they are annoying agricultural producers, what will happen to agriculture in the future is a larger problem."

Forty years ago, he explained, Jordan's population was very small and "we could not and need not cultivate all land." In 1952, he says, Jordan's population stood at 586,000 people who used the same area of land that is being used today. "Three million people in 1990 are using less land because of urban development." Out of Amman's total area of 620 square kilometres, the 300 square kilometres are being used for urban development regardless if the land was suitable for agriculture or not, Dr. Taimeh pointed out. "Urban development is consuming almost 1.7 million dunums of woodland, out of three and a half million dunums which otherwise could be used for agriculture," he said.

If this situation continues, agriculture will not have a bright future, the experts agree. One way to counter the expected shortage in water, is to "start collecting surface water," Dr. Taimeh believes. During dry years, specialists estimate that about six billion cubic metres of water can be collected. In wet years the amount can rise to as high as 11 billion cubic metres.

Because of the saturation of the Jordan Valley and with the simple method of collecting running water, Dr. Taimeh sees a great advantage in moving eastward to the desert and exploiting land for agricultural

products.

"The land is suitable for cultivation as long as there is a stable source of water — surface water," Dr. Taimeh said.

A publication issued by the Higher Council for Science and Technology states: "The badia holds numerous and rich natural resources in quantities adequate for overall developmental requirements." One of the major resources, "beside the vast area available for development is surface and ground water."

At the moment, Dr. Taimeh told the Jordan Times, there is a pilot project run by the faculty of agriculture at the University of Jordan and the European Economic Community (EEC) for agricultural production in the semi arid and arid land as well as areas suffering from desertification. The project which is located 30 kilometres south east of Amman aims to "develop lands which receive 100-200mm of annual precipitation," Dr. Taimeh said.

"The existing ecological systems of this region (which represents more than 13 per cent of the area of Jordan) are fragile and prone to degradation. Unless new systems are introduced, they will be exposed to further degradation," a report from the agricultural department at the University states. In other words, Dr. Taimeh said, "collecting surface water is being singled out as the only way because it has been proven that water collection in the east is feasible and cheap. If we use this technique where land rotation is good, we will have agricultural activity."

As billions of dollars have been spent to develop the Jordan Valley, the project intends to call for similar arrangements in the desert area. The initial joint project is a seven-year, two-phase plan. "We drew a master plan for agricultural development in that area based on water harvesting," Dr. Taimeh said.

The project is now being reviewed by the ministers of planning and agriculture and the centre for arid land and studies. Two hypothesis were given: the arid land has good potential to produce economic crops, but because precipitation is not enough to support stable agriculture, irrigation practices will have to be a major component of any farming system. "The major constraint in selecting research activities will be related to the availability of irrigation water at a proper time. This singles out the development of surface water, with all the associated practices, as the sole, but logical source of water if large scale development is to be sought in this region," the University of Jordan report states.

The other hypothesis is that it is assumed that even with the best utilisation of surface water, "the amount available is not enough to cultivate more than 30 to 35 per cent of the region." A good and reasonable use for such left-over land is range, the report said. It is explained that to develop the left-over land "plant cover improvement by protecting the existing species as well as the introduction of new species becomes an important component of an integrated development activities to be undertaken by the project."

According to Dr. Taimeh, the project is expected to provide significant contribution in finding means to maintain agricultural productivity of soils under threat from desertification, to identify the potential of different kinds of soils to produce different crops. The project will seek to identify different types of farming systems suitable for the local environment and practical solutions to desertification. Dr. Taimeh added that, "we will train personnel on various aspects of integrated agricultural development and accumulate knowledge and experience that can be used to stimulate public awareness to focus attention on the misuses of those areas that suffer from high rate of desertification."

World arms spending fell in 1990

By Randall Mikkelsen

Reuters

STOCKHOLM — Worldwide military spending and arms trading fell significantly in 1990 despite the buildup to the Gulf war, the arms-trade watchdog SIPRI said in its 1991 yearbook released Friday.

But persistent regional and ethnic conflicts mean world security will not rise much as arms spending falls, said SIPRI, the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute.

"In spite of the Gulf conflict, world military spending declined significantly in 1990, and this trend is set to continue," Saadet Deger, head of SIPRI's military spending project, told a news conference.

Total world military spending fell in real terms by five per cent to \$950 billion in 1990, compared with a two per cent decline in 1989, SIPRI said. Global trade in conventional arms fell 35 per cent.

SIPRI attributed the declines to a changing political climate in Europe, progress in arms control, the growing cost of high-tech weapons systems, and tight national budgets worldwide.

But SIPRI Director Walthers Stutzle said: "There is no outbreak of peace within reach. Ethnic and regional conflicts will become more problematic, not less."

SIPRI said there were 31 armed conflicts in 1990, down from 33 in 1989, but not counting Iraq's August 2 invasion of Kuwait.

The Soviet Union's military budget fell about 10 per cent in 1990 from an estimated

\$270 billion in 1989, when it equalled at least 12 per cent of economic output, SIPRI said.

In the United States, military spending fell six per cent after inflation to 296.3 billion in 1990, and similar annual cuts were forecast for the next five years.

SIPRI said the assembling of an allied army to fight the Gulf war had benefited immensely from a \$2.5 trillion U.S. military buildup over the last 15 years.

"The military circumstances could not have been less propitious for a challenge to U.S. interests in the Persian Gulf," SIPRI said.

Deger estimated the military cost of the Gulf war buildup at about \$12.2 billion for the allies and Iraq.

But Deger said she was unsure how much of that spending had already been

planned and the figure was not counted in SIPRI's world 1990 military spending total.

The group estimated the cost of the Gulf crisis, counting factors such as higher oil prices but not including physical damage, at \$53 billion before war broke out in January.

Deger said even with the still-unknown Gulf war costs included, arms spending will continue to decline in 1991.

Iraq, one of the world's top arms buyers of the last decade, was frozen out of the market by international embargoes. Its weapons imports, measured in 1985 prices, fell to \$59 million in 1990 from \$1.2 billion a year earlier.

Reflecting the Gulf war buildup, Saudi Arabia was the world's top weapons importer

in 1990. Its imports rose almost 60 per cent to \$2.6 billion in 1985 terms.

Reversing a long-established ranking, the United States surpassed the Soviet Union in overall arms exports, because of a decline in Soviet weapons sales to Iraq, India and Afghanistan.

The U.S. share of the world arms market rose to 40 per cent from 24 per cent in 1989, while the Soviet share fell to 29 per cent from 40 per cent.

SIPRI said the United States and the Soviet Union began to scale back their nuclear arms programmes in 1990.

"For the first time since the nuclear era began, the major nuclear weapons nations began to reduce their forces and plan for a less nuclear-armed future," it said.

Same war, contrasting capitals

By Mark Fritz
The Associated Press

ALONG THE BAGHDAD HIGHWAY — Kuwait City and Baghdad linked by a road and a war, now have the mutual task of repairing the devastation and reviving their economy.

Wealthy Kuwait has the money, but still lacks enough people willing, able or available to work.

Iraq has the bodies, but not the bucks to fix damaged utilities, rebuild bridges or repair bombed-out buildings quickly.

Still, Baghdad bustles far more than Kuwait City, which is 450 miles to the southwest down a highway that won't be carrying residents of one city to the other any time soon.

After the war, President Saddam Hussein ordered his engineers to repair Iraq's scores of bombed bridges within six

months.

Large cranes work on the shattered spans across the Tigris River in Baghdad. Workers labour far into the night and on Fridays.

Virtually no telephone service has been restored, however, and power outages are frequent, but officials boast that they are moving quickly than Kuwait.

"We have restored 76 per cent of our electricity and our oil refineries and we have done it without any outside help," said Uday Taji, an information ministry official.

It took the U.S. army corps of engineers to restore Kuwaiti telephone, power and water service.

Most shops and businesses in Kuwait City remain closed and luxury hotels like the Meridien and the Sheraton look just as ruined as they did immediately after the war.

More than half the Kuwaitis still have not returned. Most of its

workers were foreigners and the government has been slow to allow them back in. Few of the emirate's rich, pampered citizens have expressed willingness to do the work themselves.

A man who owns four shops in Kuwait said he could open anytime, but has no one to work in them and convoys of goods often are held up at the border by red tape.

Businessmen seeking contracts for reconstruction say they can't penetrate a sluggish bureaucracy that is still assessing what is needed and where.

Baghdad, though broke, breathes seamy life. Its residents live a more western lifestyle. The city teems with saloons and cabarets. Uncensored American movies are sold on videocassette.

In Kuwait, where Islamic law is stricter, a photo of a movie star's cleavage in an American magazine still can still be blacked out.

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Slaney impressive in year's fastest women's 1,500 metres

SAN JOSE, California (Agencies) — Often-injured Mary Slaney made an impressive return to international athletics by clocking four minutes 49.2 seconds for the fastest women's 1,500 metres of the year at the Bruce Jenner Classic Grand Prix meeting.

Leroy Burrell easily won the men's 200 metres as he used an aiding wind of 2.9 metres per second to clock 20.02 seconds. The time, although wind-aided, equalled countryman Michael Johnson's best time of the year, as Burrell prepared to face Johnson at the U.S. National Championships in three weeks.

But Burrell said his time in his first 200 metres of the year wasn't a message for Johnson. "He's going to run the 200, and I'm going to run the 200, and eventually one of us is going to win," said Burrell, who will attempt to qualify for the World Championships in both the 100 and 200 metres at the U.S. meeting.

Slaney, the 1988 world champion, held off compatriot American Patti Miller in a stirring stretch run to claim her first outdoor track victory in three years.

"It feels great to win, it feels

even better to be running healthy," said Slaney, who has been hampered by problems with her Achilles tendon and ran her first race in more than a year at a small meeting in Eugene, Oregon, earlier this month.

Plummer, the dominant women's middle distance runner since 1989, pulled alongside Slaney in the final 50 metres.

The two then ran stride for stride before Slaney burst in front again near the finish.

"This just makes me feel like I'm back," Slaney said after Saturday's win. "I'm not really race fit yet. But for not having raced much in the past two years, I'm happy."

"Really, without that (tendon surgery) I wouldn't be running. It's so nice right now to go to the track and not have to worry about whether I'm going to make it to the next workout."

Plummer finished in 4:05.04, achieving a lifetime best despite fighting a case of the flu in recent days.

"Maybe I missed a step today because of that but I can't use that as an excuse," Plummer said. She said Slaney obviously has come a long way in her comeback.

Slaney said the win was her

first since running first in a 1,000-metre run indoors at Portland in January 1989. She said she hadn't won outdoors since taking the 3,000- and 1,500-metre finals at the 1988 Olympic trials in Indianapolis.

Slaney said she's confident she will make the world cup team and will next run in the 1,500 metre race at the Mobil outdoor championships in New York from June 12-15.

Sue Rembao, another American making a comeback, cleared 1.96 metres (six feet five inches) for the best women's high jump of the outdoor season. She previously competed at the U.S. Olympic silver medalist Mike Powell needed his sixth and final jump to take first in the men's high jump with a leap of 8.30 metres (27 feet 2 3/4 inches), and former world record holder Renaldo Nehemiah captured the men's 110-metre hurdles in 13.47 seconds.

Olympic double gold medalist Jackie Joyner-Kersey, competing in a mini-heptathlon, won her section of the women's 100-metre hurdles in a wind-aided 13.02 seconds and cleared 1.90 metres (six feet 2 3/4 inches) in the high jump.

Americans won both 3,000-



Mary Slaney

metre races. Shelly Steely won the women's race in eight minutes 50.39 seconds and Aaron Ramirez took the men's event in seven minutes 45.82 seconds. Briton Steve Cram was a no-show.

Olympic champion Steve Lewis won the men's 400 metres in 45.28 seconds. Dean Starkey scored 5.76 metres (18 feet 10 3/4 inches) to win the pole vault, and German Astrid Kumberuss won the women's shot put with a best of 19.13 metres (62 feet 9 3/4 inches).

Slaney's comeback was impressive, as she had not competed in any outdoor track events since 1988.

Gascoigne dreams of Italian debut

WEMBLEY (AP) — The man who is to become Italian Soccer League's new Diego Maradona should have been here Saturday.

Instead of weaving through Argentina's defence as an integral part of England's midfield, Paul Gascoigne was lying in a hospital bed dreaming of a lucrative career in Italy after his \$15-million transfer to Lazio of Rome was signed Friday.

Lazio has agreed to pay billions of lire for the mercurial player even though he may not wear its uniform until the 1992-93 season.

Such is the appeal of a player who dazzles fans on the field but infuriates people off of it.

Gascoigne, known as "Gazza" to fans, teammates and media, is recovering from an operation to repair torn knee ligaments.

He suffered the injury in the 15th minute of the English FA Cup final while fouling Nottingham Forest's Gary Charles and is expected to be out until at least Christmas.

According to British press reports Saturday, Lazio will allow Gascoigne to remain with Tottenham next season although he cannot play for the London team.

Gascoigne's foul resulted in a direct kick at the top of the penalty area that Stuart Pearce curled around the Tottenham wall for the first goal of the game.

Although Tottenham rallied with a second-half and extra-time goal to win 2-1, Gascoigne was already in hospital by the time captain Gary Mabbutt picked up the cup.

Last Saturday was a typical day in the life of the talented north-easterner.

Before the final, he cheekily

kissed the hands of Princess Diana and the Duchess of Kent as they were introduced to the teams. Then he disgraced the game with two unpleasant fouls, the second of which put him in the hospital.

Gascoigne also has a reputation for being goaded into fights in bars. Under contract to one of the British newspapers, he has clashed with photographers who work for its rivals.

His aggressiveness had him ejected from a game last season for swearing at a referee. He is very emotional on the field in other ways; exemplified by his actions after England's World Cup semifinal defeat to West Germany in a penalty shootout when he kissed his jersey and wept.

And like Maradona, Gascoigne has weight and injury problems.

A day after Tottenham beat north London rival Arsenal in the FA Cup semifinal, he was operated on for a double hernia. That was followed by the knee injury in the cup final.

Despite his highly acclaimed ability, critics say his fiery temperament may work against him in the stormy atmosphere of the Italian League, where defenders frequently use fouling to stop talented players.

Gascoigne can expect the sort of harsh treatment Maradona received while playing for Napoli. But Lazio, who has not won the Italian League title since 1974, hope he can do for them what Maradona did for Napoli, who won two titles in four seasons with the Argentinian starting in midfield.

Reports have differed as to how much cocaine was found at the suburban flat where Maradona, 30, was arrested with two friends April 26.

Interior Minister Julio Mera Figueroa said after the arrest it was much less than the half-kilo first reported by the local media.

Forensic tests had shown some of the substances confiscated by police were high-purity cocaine while other samples proved to be sugar, court sources have said.

Since his release on \$20,000 bail Maradona has left his Buenos Aires flat only for a few jogging sessions with friends in a nearby park.

His agent Marcos Franchi said Maradona, who led the Argentina team to its 1986 World Cup title and to the runner-up spot in last year's finals, was receiving treatment for drug abuse from a team of doctors and nurses.

If found guilty of those

Maradona may enter drug clinic to avoid jail

BUENOS AIRES (R) — Argentine soccer star Diego Maradona, out on bail on cocaine charges, could escape a jail term of up to two years by voluntarily joining a drug rehabilitation programme, legal sources said Saturday.

Local news agencies, quoting court sources, reported Friday that Maradona's blood and urine samples had indicated he was dependent on drugs rather than a sporadic user.

Legal sources, commenting on the reports, said a judge could order local law allow Maradona to opt for up to two years of drug treatment instead of going to jail if he were proven to be drug-dependent.

In such a case, criminal proceedings against the stocky midfielder would be dropped. If convicted of possession and consumption charges, Maradona would face three months to two years in jail.

Maradona, banned from soccer until July 1992 for failing a dope test in March, is also accused of supplying drugs to others free of charge.

It found guilty of those

charges, he could face three to 12 years in jail but the charges could be dropped if the amount of cocaine involved were less than five grams, the legal sources added.

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If found guilty of those

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF & TAMARA KIRSCH
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East-West vulnerable. South deals.

NORTH
♠ 9 8 6 4
♥ A K
♦ 9 8 3 2
♣ J 10 8

WEST
♠ 7 5 2
♥ Q 10 6 3
♦ K J
♣ 7 6 4

EAST
♠ A J
♥ 8 7 5
♦ Q 10 7 4
♣ 9 5 3 2

SOUTH
♠ K 10 3
♥ J 9 4 2
♦ A 6 5
♣ A K Q

The bidding:
South West North East
1 NT Pass 3 NT Pass

Opening lead: Three of ♣. If you are playing in a game where everyone is reasonably competent, you can deduce an enormous amount from the play of the cards. South backed his card-reading ability to the hilt on this deal from a rubber-bridge game, and he was aided by the knowledge that East was an expert defender.

Many players would have used Stayman to check on the possibility of a 4-4 spade fit. However, North felt that since his short suit consist-

Injured Lendl pulls out of French Open

PARIS (R) — Triple champion Ivan Lendl pulled out of the French Open on the eve of the Grand Slam tournament Sunday.

Lendl, who would have been the third seed, said in a brief statement that he had not recovered sufficiently from a hand injury.

The Czechoslovak-born American resident, who pulled out of the Italian Open earlier this month after injuring his right hand, said doctors had advised him not to resume playing until the end of this week.

The 31-year-old Lendl's withdrawal opens up the top half of the men's draw which features world number one Stefan Edberg as well as U.S. Open champion Pete Sampras.

Lendl's place in the first round, against Argentine clay specialist Martin Jaite, will be taken by lucky loser Andrew Sznajder, tournament organisers said.

Sznajder is a member of the Canadian Davis Cup team. Lendl, who won at Roland Garros in 1984, 1986 and 1987, missed the French Open for the first time in his career last year when he decided to concentrate on his preparations for Wimbledon.

He was beaten in the semifinals at Wimbledon.

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Bayern routs Berlin 7-3

BONN (Agencies) — Olaf Thon scored three goals to lead Bayern Munich to a 7-3 rout over last-place Hertha Berlin Saturday, pulling the defending Bundesliga champions within two points of league-leading Kaiserslautern with three games remaining.

Playing before a home crowd of 44,000, Thon scored in the 19th, 45th and 72nd minutes to give Bayern its 17th victory along with eight draws and six losses for 42 points. Kaiserslautern improved to 17-10-4 for 44 points with a 1-1 victory a 1-1 over VfL Bochum Friday.

In other games Saturday, St. Pauli shutout FC Cologne 2-0; Bayer Leverkusen and Hamburg SV tied 2-2; VfB Stuttgart and Borussia Moenchengladbach drew 1-1; Karlsruhe and Werder Bremen also tied 1-1; while SG Wattenscheid beat Fortuna Dueseldorf 2-0.

Roland Wohlfarth consecutive goals in the 50th and 54th minutes to add to Bayern's offensive display. Stefan Effenberg and Manfred Bader also scored for Bayern.

Dragutin Celic, Sven Kretschmer and Marco Zernicke tallied for Berlin.

Third-place Bremen had to struggle with their hosts, 11th-ranked Karlsruhe.

Playing before a crowd of about 17,000, Marco Bode put Bremen ahead with a goal in the 54th minute, but Mehmet Scholl scored the equalizer for Karlsruhe nine minutes later.

Bayern went into the game without German World Cup player Jurgen Kohler and his defensive partner Roland Grahmmer, who are both suspended.

Jupp Heynckes' side looked hesitant early on until the

diminutive Thon struck his first goal to bring relief in the 19th minute. Striker Sven Kretschmer hit an equalizer for the visitors in the 37th minute.

But once Stefan Effenberg put Bayern 2-1 up two minutes later and Thon added a penalty just before halftime the issue was never in doubt.

Roland Wohlfarth, the league's top scorer, boosted his season's tally to 20 with goals in the 50th and 54th minutes before the 25-year-old Thon completed his hat-trick in the 72nd.

Dragutin Celic and Marco Zernicke scored consolation goals for bottom of the table Hertha in the 59th and 87th minutes.

"Often the easiest games for us turn out to be the hardest. Today it was different," Heynckes said.

"Grahmmer and Kohler were not easy to replace in defence and there were a few communication problems."

Meanwhile outbreaks of violence marred the closing day of former east Germany's Oberliga professional soccer league Saturday. It merges next season with the Bundesliga.

Some 200 young Berlin supporters stormed the stadium press area in the eastern town of Frankfurt On The Oder after Berlin beat Victoria Frankfurt 2-1.

Police arrested eight people after the attack. Nobody was hurt.

Fighting on the terraces brought a six-minute interruption to a match between Sachsen Leipzig and Magdeburg.

Hooliganism flared this season in the former Communist east, most of whose teams will now be relegated to lower divisions of the Bundesliga.

PSV keep up the pace in Dutch League title race

AMSTERDAM (R) — Leaders PSV Eindhoven beat FC Twente Enschede 3-1 at home to stay two points ahead of title rivals Ajax Amsterdam in the Dutch Soccer League.

But, with Ajax having a game in hand of PSV, the race is likely to go right down to the last day and could be settled on goal difference. The win put PSV on 51 points but Ajax can close the gap when they travel to mid-table FC Volendam. After that both the leaders have two games left.

Playing with fresh determination, PSV subjected Twente to a constant attack from the opening minutes Saturday.

Maleeva-Fragniere defeats Kelesi in Geneva final

GENEVA (AP) — Manuela Maleeva-Fragniere of Switzerland beat Canadian Helen Kelesi 6-3, 3-6, 6-3 Sunday in the final of the \$150,000 European Open Women's Tennis Tournament.

For the second-seeded Fragniere, a winner here two years ago, it was her second title in 1991 after the Austrian Indoor last February.

"I am particularly pleased because she is difficult to play," said the 24-year-old Bulgarian-born Fragniere, who became Swiss by marriage.

She began the match aggressively, mixing her usual steady baseline game with rushes to the net and drop shots. The fourth-seeded Kelesi struggled with her

serve throughout the 38-minute first set.

"I couldn't seem to get power behind my serve and it's hard to play when you are serving poorly," said Kelesi, 21, who is ranked 24th in the world.

But Kelesi picked up her game in the second set, breaking Fragniere's at 4-3 and closing out the set at 5-3 40-30 when the Swiss floated a forehand over the baseline.

Fragniere raced to a 5-0 lead in the third set as Kelesi showed effects of her three-hour victory over top-seed Conchita Martinez of Spain in Saturday's semifinals.

"My legs and my whole body are sore," said Kelesi, last year's losing finalist here.

Argentina England draw 2-2

WEMBLEY (AP) — Claudio Garcia and Dario Franco scored on second-half headers to rally World Cup runner up Argentina to a 2-2 tie with England in an exhibition game Saturday.

After Gary Lineker's header put England in front with his 10th goal in an English national team uniform, David Platt made it 2-0 with another header five minutes after halftime, both goals coming off crossing by Stuart Pearce.

Antonio Mohammed set up both Argentina's goals, centering the ball twice off corner kicks. The 44,497 fans saw England dominate for an hour before Mohammed replaced German Martellotto in the 60th minute.

Argentina's game degenerated in the last 15 minutes with some vicious fouls. At one stage almost the entire team was arguing with Yugoslav referee Zoran Petrovic.

With minutes remaining, Petrovic yellow carded Garcia for a crunching tackle on England rightback Lee Dixon.

The victory stretched England manager Graham Taylor's unbeaten streak to eight games since his appointment after last summer's World Cup.

Lineker's 15th minute goal came from a looping free kick by Pearce. Alan Smith's decoy run fooled the Argentina defence allowing Lineker to get to the ball with a diving header.

England goalkeeper David Seaman had to race out of his area to clear the ball, but otherwise was rarely troubled.

Ariel Boldrin shot just wide from 25 metres and, at the other end, Sergio Goycochea made saves on shots from Pearce and John Barnes.

Five minutes before half, Seaman dived low to his right to save a shot from Diego Simeone. Barnes took the clearing pass, sprinted down the left and curled a right-footer that Goycochea finger-tipped wide of the far post.

Five minutes after half time England moved further ahead with a near copy of the first goal. Platt beat a defender in the air to Pearce's pass before heading a powerful shot into the net.

Pearce nearly scored one of his own when he drifted through the penalty area with only Goycochea to beat but and rolled the ball across the face of the goal.

Argentina began its rally in the 65th minute when Garcia met one of Mohammed's corner's three yards in front of the goal and directed into the net.

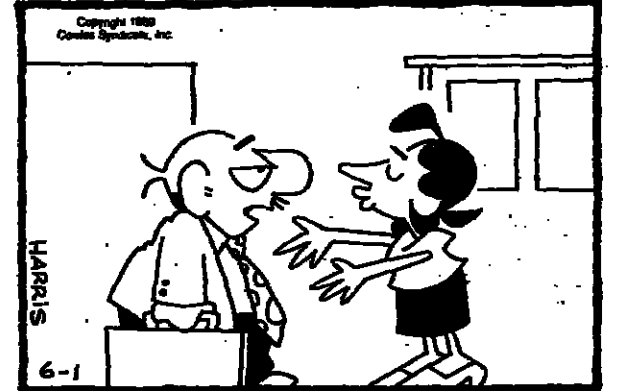
Six minutes later, Mohammed set up the tying goal from the other wing.

Francisco climbed above the English defence to get his head on the ball and pound a long-range header into the top right-hand corner of the net.

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Answer: THE "O O O O O O O O O O"

Yesterday's Jumble: GRIEF KITTY BENIGN SQUALL

Answer: The hardest thing to give -- IS "IN"

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's

Jumble: GRIEF KITTY BENIGN SQUALL

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Economy

JORDAN TIMES, MONDAY, MAY 27, 1991

Financial Markets
in co-operation with
Cairo Amman Bank

Weekly F.X. Market Summary (May 20 - May 24, 1991)

The U.S. dollar rally, which began Friday, May 17, when Sweden surprised the market by linking the crown to the ECU, filtered early last week when the dollar failed to breach resistance at (1.76) marks. Another brief dollar rally took place Wednesday, but the U.S. currency ended the week well below levels reached at the end of the previous week.

The dollar traded higher in the Far East Monday as uncertainty over possible demand for dollars by Scandinavian arbitrageurs prevailed. Many had expected demand for dollars to resume, as Scandinavian dealers continue to cover short dollar positions. The expectations were fueled late last week when Sweden ended the crown's linkage to a basket of currencies, 21% of which was comprised by the dollar, linking it instead to the ECU. But when strong dollar demand did not materialize, the U.S. currency failed to breach resistance at (1.76) marks triggering a wave of profit taking by dealers, who were forced to liquidate long dollar positions taken at the end of the previous week. The dollar ended the day at its highest levels for the week, however, closing in New York at (1.7315/25) marks, (138.45/55) yen and at (1.7165/75) dollars to the sterling pound.

The U.S. currency fell further Tuesday when the Bundesbank and the Central Bank of Sweden unexpectedly intervened in support of the German currency. The move caught the market by surprise, and given the uncertainty over the Swedish crown situation, the dollar fell sharply, closing in New York at its lowest levels for the week against most major currencies. It closed at (1.7115/25) marks, (137.25/35) yen and at (1.7379/89) dollars to the sterling pound. Some observers speculated that further dollar demand by Scandinavian arbitrageurs would only materialize if the dollar fell below (1.70) marks.

The dollar rallied briefly Wednesday as rumours of a possible discount rate cut by the Bank of Japan resurfaced, and was pushed higher by comments from U.S. commerce secretary Mosbacher, who was reported as saying he believes "... the U.S. recession has hit bottom ..." and that he expects the U.S. economy to "... begin turning around by the summer." Further dollar buying occurred when it breached resistance at (1.7210) marks and at (137.80) yen.

The Wednesday rally proved short-lived, however, as the dollar lost ground against most major currencies Thursday, despite the release of April durable goods orders in the U.S., to show a rise of (2.9%), versus market expectations of a (2.1%) rise. The improvement came on the heels of three consecutive monthly declines, and observers maintained that the market is awaiting more concrete evidence the U.S. recession is coming to an end before the dollar uptrend resumes.

Friday witnessed a strong Deutschmark rally, inspired by record gains in the German stock market. As the yen continued to suffer from an anticipated decline in Japanese interest rates, and while sterling exchange rates pushed down due to a (0.5%) cut in Base Rates to (10.5%), the mark was pushed higher by comments from Bundesbank deputy president, Helmut Schlesinger, who said that German interest rates may not have to be raised further as a result of interest rate decisions abroad. He added that money supply growth in Germany was under control and that recent rises in wage settlements "... maybe will have only a mild impact on inflation." The mark thus ended at its highest levels for the week, closing in New York at (1.7035) marks to the dollar, (2.9564) marks to the sterling pound and at (81.17) yen, versus (1.7385) marks to the dollar, (2.9746) marks to the sterling pound and (79.58) yen at the end of the previous week.

The dollar is expected to drop further this week, as a result of technical selling, and in anticipation of the release of first quarter GNP figures in the U.S. on Wednesday, which some observers expect to show a decline of (2.7%).

New York Closing Rates for Major Currencies Against the U.S. Dollar

Currency	17/5/1991 Close	24/5/1991 Close	Percent Change
Sterling Pound	1.7110	1.7355	1.43%
Deutsche Mark	1.7385	1.7035	2.05%
Swiss Franc	1.4700	1.4513	-1.29%
French Franc	5.8885	5.7920	1.67%
Japanese Yen	138.35	138.27	0.06%

USD Per STG
Euro-Currency Interest Rates

Currency	17/5/1991 1-Month (%)	24/5/1991 1-Month (%)	17/5/1991 1-Year (%)	24/5/1991 1-Year (%)
U.S. Dollar	5.87	6.56	5.68	6.43
Sterling Pound	11.81	11.00	11.62	10.93
Deutsche Mark	8.75	9.06	8.75	8.93
Swiss Franc	8.06	7.81	8.00	7.75
French Franc	9.00	9.12	9.12	9.06
Japanese Yen	7.82	7.40	7.87	7.40

Interbank bid rates for amounts exceeding U.S. Dollars 1,000,000 or equivalent.

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin Date: 26/5/1991

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	.680	.682
Sterling Pound	1.1782	1.1841
Deutsche Mark	.3987	.4007
Swiss Franc	.4680	.4703
French Franc	.1173	.1179
Japanese Yen	.4912	.4937
Dutch Guilder	.3539	.3557
Swedish Krona	.1109	.1115
Italian Lira	.0536	.0539
Belgian Franc	.01938	.01948

* Per 100

Banker sees EC as core of a Europe confederation

TOKYO (R) — Europe is likely to develop into a confederation with the 12 members of the European Community (EC) as a single country at its core, the president of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development has said.

Mr. Jacques Attali told a seminar on challenges for the 21st century the confederation was likely to include all the countries of Europe, including the Soviet Union, a market of 700 million people, by the end of this decade. He said this was the most likely of four scenarios for the future of

Europe. One was that the European Community would swallow up all the other European countries, and another that each would be an independent and sovereign member of a confederation.

The fourth, which he called a nightmare, was that the 12 would not agree to a central bank, a common currency and political union, a result that would lead backwards to nationalism, xenophobia, war, migration and recession.

The most likely scenario, he

said, was that, through difficult negotiations, the 12 would agree on a single currency, a central bank and unified political institutions.

"Such a confederation, linked by a common infrastructure, democracy, market economies and joint institutions, will be open to the world. With growth and an open market, it will be good for the world," he said.

The bank, headquartered in London and officially inaugurated last month, aims to promote market reforms and private industry in central and East Europe.

Sudan restricts withdrawals of deposits from banks

KHARTOUM (AP) — The Sudanese government has decided to freeze at least 20 per cent of bank deposits over \$8,333 for a year without interest payment.

Sid Ahmed Al Sheikh, governor of the Central Bank of Sudan, announced the decision Saturday, a week after the government's deadline expired for Sudanese to exchange their bank notes for new paper money.

Al Sheikh said deposits made after the May 18 deadline and that exceed 100,000 pounds (\$8,333) will have 30 per cent of their value frozen. If the amount was deposited before the cut off date then only 20 per cent will be held.

He said the confiscated money will be reimbursed without interest within 12 months.

Sudan's military government introduced the currency exchange plan to force Sudanese to put their money into the banking system. It has complained that out of the 19 billion pounds in circulation only two billion went through the banking system. One dollar is worth 12 pounds on the black market.

The government gave Sudanese one week to trade their old notes for new ones. Each person received only 5,000 pounds (\$416) in cash of the new notes. The rest had to be put in bank accounts.

Debt burdens 85% of U.S. households

WASHINGTON (AP) — Eighty-five per cent of all American households owed money at some time last year — on mortgages and automobiles credit cards and department store wares.

U.S. household debt nearly tripled in the last decade, according to a Federal Reserve study. But analysts say there's no need for alarm.

"I don't think it's dangerous," economist Bruce Steinberg of Merrill Lynch Capital Markets said. "I don't think it means mass consumer bankruptcies, or that people are going to lose their homes."

Still, the record debt could slow consumer spending and thus temper a recovery from the recession.

"In the '90s, at best, consumers' spending will keep track with their incomes, unlike the '80s, when debt spending grew so much faster than incomes," Steinberg said.

Consumer spending accounts for two-thirds of all economy activity and is critical to the strength of a recovery from the recession.

The study shows that home mortgages and consumer debt rose from \$1.3 trillion at the end of 1980 to just under \$3.4 trillion at the end of 1990. It was conducted by Glenn Canner and Charles Luckett and published in the Federal Reserve Bulletin.

Home-mortgage debt, which includes home-equity lines of credit, totalled \$2.6 trillion at the end of 1990, while so-called consumer debt amounted to about \$800 billion. Consumer debt includes credit cards and automobile loans.

Economist Samuel Kahan of

Fuji Securities in Chicago noted that the repayment period for automobile and some household loans often is longer now than in the past and that the net worth of U.S. households had increased over the decade.

Other Federal Reserve statistics show that consumer debt declined for three straight months through February as the recession deepened, the longest stretch in four years.

But Kahan contends "once consumption starts rising, credit will start increasing again."

Canner and Luckett cited a recent survey by the University of Michigan showing that 85 per cent of all households had an outstanding debt obligation at some point during the 12 months preceding the poll.

The study said total household debt represented 83.5 per cent of disposable personal income last December, up from 85.4 per cent in 1980. Of that, 63.1 per cent was home-mortgage debt and 20.4 per cent was consumer debt.

"On its face, this rise seems to indicate a substantial increase in the burden of debt, but that conclusion is not necessarily warranted," the authors wrote.

"The vast majority of indebted households reported no problems meeting their debt payment obligations on time during the 12 months preceding the survey," they found.

Still, the American Bankruptcy Institute reported that the number of consumer bankruptcies more than doubled since 1985 to a total of 660,796 in the year ending last June 30. Consumers filed 90 per cent of all bankruptcy cases during that year.

ADB says eastern Europe no match for Asian economies

MANILA (R) — Asia's dynamic economies face a shortage of international credit in 1991 because of the huge demands of eastern Europe and the Gulf for capital, the Asian Development Bank (ADB) has said.

But it said that eastern Europe was unlikely to be able to compete with the economies of Asia over the next few years.

"There are good indications that eastern European economies... will not be serious competitors of the dynamic Asian economies in the foreseeable future," the ADB said in a report.

"Rather, it is more likely that they will find it increasingly difficult to identify areas where they can maintain an international comparative advantage," the Manila-based bank said in its outlook report for 1991.

It said the expected shift in financial resources would create competition with development countries and could drain funds from Asia.

"The competition for funds will increase, as will their cost," the report said.

The rebuilding of Kuwait and Iraq would put further strain on the world financial system.

It anticipated that only "choice" borrowers might find access to external finance. "At present, a major reduction in global military spending appears to be the only way to avoid such a scenario," it said.

According to Jacques Attali, the head of the new European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), eastern Europe could get up to \$123 billion in aid from Western development agencies and private firms over the next decade.

In a foreword to the outlook, ADB President Kimimasa Tanizaki said: "Confidence in the Asia-Pacific region remains strong as the economic base has become diversified."

"Domestic markets have become more important, trade linkages within the region have strengthened and economic restructuring, benefitting from high investment ratios, continues," he said.

Iraqi wheat harvest may fall short of '90

BAGHDAD (R) — Iraq's wheat harvest will fall short of last year's despite good rains and a campaign to beat U.N. sanctions by planting 40 per cent more land, agricultural experts said Saturday.

The harvest, completed in the south and under way in the north, will probably produce between 800,000 and 850,000 tonnes of wheat, compared with about 900,000 tonnes in 1990, they said.

The harvest was badly hit by shortages of fuel, certified seeds and spare parts for agricultural machinery, they said.

Labour shortages because of conscription did not have a major effect because agriculture in Iraq is highly mechanised.

U.N. trade sanctions have been in force against Iraq since last August, when it invaded neighbouring Kuwait, and the country's oil refineries were badly damaged in the allied air campaign during the six-week Gulf war.

The Iraqi government had hoped that a bigger harvest would help replace some of the 2.3 million tonnes of wheat a year which Iraq has been importing.

But the import requirement will be even greater than usual and it is not clear how the govern-

ment will fill the gap and pay for the imports while the sanctions continue.

Baghdad says it has signed to buy one million tonnes of Australian wheat, 500,000 tonnes of Canadian wheat and 200,000 tonnes of rice from Thailand. An Australian Wheat Board spokesman said talks about a possible sale had taken place but no deal was concluded pending agreement how Iraq would pay for the wheat.

The Iraqi government is distributing seven kilograms of wheat flour per person a month through a ration-card system and Baghdad residents say there is no shortage in government shops.

On the free market, flour fetches 4.5 dinars (\$15) a kilogramme, about 70 times the official price, but Trade Minister Mohammad Mehdi Saleh says people were buying free-market supplies only in emergencies.

Saleh told the army newspaper Al Qadisiya the government was distributing 300,000 tonnes of foodstuffs a month through the ration system. He gave no indication of how long stocks would last. Flour accounts for about 60 per cent of the ration.

The monthly rice ration will go

up from one kilogramme per person to 1.5 kilograms in June, suggesting there was enough to last until the rice harvest in September.

Saleh said the government lost some of its strategic food reserve when mobs looted warehouses during the Shi'ite Muslim uprising in the south in March. But again he gave no figures.

The reserve was stored in small depots across the country before the Gulf war broke out in January on the assumption that transport and the telephone system would suffer, he said. This made the reserves more vulnerable to looting.

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Apparently preparing for prolonged sanctions, the government decreed this week that farmers must sell their wheat, barley and paddy rice to government agencies.

No figures are yet available for the barley harvest, which in recent years has varied between 600,000 tonnes and just over one million tonnes.

Saudis set to boost oil output starting mid-92

DHAHRAN, Saudi Arabia (R) — Saudi Arabia, the world's leading oil exporter, is likely to increase output by 1.5 million barrels a day by the end of 1994, Gulf oil industry sources say.

The projection comes amid reports that the kingdom's plans to increase capacity have been faltering.

Saudi Oil Minister Hisham Al Nazer last March made public Riyadh's goal to restore capacity to levels unseen since an oil shock after the 1979 Iranian revolution.

The first extra barrels are likely to come through in mid-1992 from the southern end of Ghawar, the world's biggest oil field.

Saudi production capacity will hold steady at 8.5 million barrels a day until the south Ghawar project is completed.

Current Saudi sales are running at almost five per cent below production capacity, as agreed

when the Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries met in Geneva.

But actual wellhead production figures are difficult to estimate as some of the sales are from stocks.

The New York-based newsletter Petroleum Intelligence Weekly reported recently that the expansion timetable was strained by shifts in policy and that 10 million barrels per day would be achieved only by 1995, and not by 1992 as some had believed last October.

At the Dhahran headquarters of Saudi Arabian Oil Company (Saudi Aramco), various speeds for raising capacity were examined during the early stages of the Gulf crisis but decisions were deferred until the outcome became clearer, industry sources said.

Reuters reported the 1994 target date two months ago and

industry sources in Saudi Arabia said there has been no hitch since to alter the project time.

"Ten million barrels per day by the end of 1994 is still the target," said one source.

Fluor Corp. has the lead contractor role constructing new plant at the northern end of Ghawar which Aramco aims to put into operation by mid-1993.

Fluor is also handling developments in two offshore fields in the Gulf, Zuluf and Marjan, which are expected to bring around 500,000 barrels per day (b/d) of Arab Medium oil stream by mid-1994, the industry sources said.

Development work on expanding production from these fields was left half-done in the mid-1980s when prices dropped and Saudi output was shackled at just above three million b/d by OPEC deals attempting to bolster the prices.

Oil firms report higher profits

NEW YORK (AP) — Texaco Inc., Chevron Corp., Amerada Hess Corp. and Oryx Energy Co. have posted double-digit increases in first-quarter profits, but the oil industry's performance reflected a decline in petroleum prices from highs recorded during the Gulf crisis.

Meanwhile, Phillips Petroleum Co. recorded a profit decline of 38 per cent, pulled down by slow sales and depressed natural gas prices.

Texaco, the nation's third-largest oil company, reported profits for the quarter ended March 31 jumped 26.5 per cent to \$415 million, or \$1.51 per share, from \$328 million or \$1.15 per share in 1990's first quarter.

The company said the performance largely grew out of strong overseas manufacturing and marketing operations, where profits roughly doubled to \$211 million due in part to stronger sales and higher profit margins.

Texaco said earnings from exploration and production were slightly higher in the U.S. but fell abroad.

Chevron, the nation's fourth-biggest oil company, reported an 18 per cent rise in first-quarter profit, attributing the gain to improvements at refining and marketing operations.

The oil industry giant also said it benefited early in the quarter from higher prices for refined products.

An unusually warm winter also eroded demand and prices for natural gas, the San Francisco-based company said.

Chevron reported quarterly net income of \$557 million or \$1.59 per share.

Amerada Hess Corp., the 15th-largest oil company, reported income rose 90.7 per cent for the first quarter, primarily due to a one-time gain from the settlement of litigation relating to natural gas sales contracts.

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FIRST AQABA FUN FISHING TOURNAMENT

The first fun fishing tournament for diplomatic, consular, U.N. staff will be held in Aquamarina Hotel-Club in Aqaba on Thursday May 30th, 1991 from 5:00 p.m. till 11:00 p.m.

The organising committee invites all participants to bring their fishing gears with them. Bates will be supplied.

A drawing for positioning will be held at 4:00 p.m.

Three awards for the first 3 winners, prizes will be provided and a special prize for the most unusual fished fish.

A cocktail and a banquet will be held for the prize award.

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Show: 12:30, 3:30, 6:30, 8:30, 10:30 p.m.

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Party looks to old friend after Gandhi widow rejects leadership

NEW DELHI (AP) — Left leaderless by the death of former Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi, the Congress Party is likely to turn to an old family friend to lead it through elections next month, newspapers said Sunday.

The reports indicated that 69-year-old P.V. Narasimha Rao is likely to be elected as interim president of the party that has led India for all but four years of its history since independence in 1947.

"The chances of Rao... are rated pretty high," the Times of India newspaper reported.

Other newspapers also said Rao was a likely candidate after Gandhi's Italian-born widow, Sonia, declined a Congress offer to head the party.

Gandhi, 46, was killed in a bomb attack last Tuesday at an election rally near Madras, the capital of the southern state of Tamil Nadu. His death interrupted national elections that had started a day earlier.

Voting in the first round of the three-stage elections was completed May 20 for 204 constituencies. Balloting for the remaining 303 constituencies has now been delayed until mid-June.

In asking Mrs. Gandhi to become party president, Congress bosses had apparently hoped to

reap sympathy votes in the remaining elections. But many observers and opposition parties criticised the decision as a proof that Congress needs a member of the Gandhi dynasty at the top to survive.

Gandhi's grandfather, Jawaharlal Nehru, was India's first prime minister, and his mother headed the government until Rajiv took over when she was assassinated in 1984.

The 18-member working committee of the Congress was supposed to meet Saturday to elect a leader, but the meeting was put off, with no date for the session scheduled.

The indecision pointed up the confusion in the party and the simmering differences among party bosses, which had previously been kept down by the Gandhi family.

But Rao, a 69-year-old leader from the southern state of Andhra Pradesh, appeared to be emerging as the consensus leader, the Indian Express newspaper said.

Rao was close to both Gandhi and his mother, former Prime Minister Indira Gandhi. He also is on the verge of political retirement and did not contest in the elections.

He was in the cabinet from



P.V. Narasimha Rao

1980-89, serving a time as foreign minister.

Sonia Gandhi, 44, has campaigned actively for her husband in his Amethi constituency along with their children. 21-year-old daughter Priyanka and 20-year-old son Rahul, but has shown scant political ambition.

In turning down the Congress request to take over as party president, Mrs. Gandhi said the tragedy made it impossible for her to accept.

On Sunday, Rahul collected the ashes of the slain leader, who was cremated in the capital Fri-

day. In keeping with Hindu customs, the ashes will be strewn in the faith's holy rivers Tuesday.

The spot chosen is Sangam, the confluence of the Ganges, Yamuna and the mythical Saraswati Rivers in the city of Allahabad, where the Nehru family lived.

Gandhi, who was prime minister from 1984 to 1989, might have regained his job in this month's election, but it was unlikely the Congress would have won a majority.

India had seemed headed for a coalition government, quite possibly with Gandhi as prime minister.

Indian news reports said Sunday the Central Bureau of Investigation, India's equivalent of the American FBI, has taken over the probe of the assassination.

Preliminary investigations have found Gandhi was killed by a suicide bomber who had strapped plastic explosives around her waist. She detonated them as she stooped to greet Gandhi. At least 17 other people including the assassin died in the blast in Sriperambudur village.

No one has claimed responsibility, but investigators believe a Sri Lankan Tamil guerrilla group, the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam, may be involved. The Tigers have denied responsibility.

U.S. urges NATO control over any European force

PARIS (R) — The United States would oppose any moves by its European allies to set up an independent military force not under NATO control, U.S. Defense Secretary Dick Cheney said Sunday.

Cheney and other NATO defense ministers are due to approve plans this week for a multinational "rapid reaction" force of up to 100,000 men aimed at deterring future threats to the alliance now the cold war is over.

But some West European powers, particularly France, also want the European allies to form a separate force — possibly with a mandate to operate outside Europe — something that NATO cannot do.

Cheney said Washington supported recent moves by Western European countries to bolster their joint security, but he stressed the Atlantic alliance must remain the cornerstone of U.S.-European military cooperation.

"We want to participate in those debates, but with the caveat that we are not interested in supporting anything that would undermine NATO," he told reporters travelling with him from Washington.

He travels on to Brussels Tuesday for the two-day NATO meeting and will then go on to Israel and Egypt.

France, whose forces are not integrated into NATO's military structure, wants a new European force to be set up under the 12-nation European Community. Others want the nine-member Western European Union (WEU) to control it.

Cheney told reporters he would reiterate to both the French and to NATO ministers that Washington supported moves by the WEU and EC to strengthen their security as economic relationships were cemented in Europe.

"But we think it is very important that these developments not undermine NATO in any way — that the foundation of North Atlantic security has to continue to be the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation," he added.

Cheney defended the use of military force in operations outside the NATO area if alliance interests were threatened elsewhere in the world.

"The Gulf war had a sobering effect on a lot of people," he said.

"It was a very good demonstration of the importance of our being able to function out of area... I think it served to bolster the notion that those of us who are members of NATO need to have arrangements for dealing with that kind of contingency."

In the interview with reporters, he said progress had been made between the United States and the Soviet Union during the past week towards settling a dispute over counting Soviet forces under a CFE treaty on conventional forces in Europe.

Meanwhile, Dutch Prime Minister Ruud Lubbers, whose country takes over the presidency of the European Community (EC) in July, urged European nations Sunday to commit themselves to playing a greater role in NATO.

But he added that a new assertive role for the Europeans in defence matters should not be allowed to shake relations with the United States.

Roh shakes up cabinet in bid to regain confidence

SEOUL (R) — South Korean President Roh Tae-Woo revamped his cabinet Sunday, replacing four ministers, to try to restore sagging public confidence in the government, a presidential spokesman said.

Roh, seeking to end the political turmoil that has rocked the nation for a month, named former prosecutor-general Kim Ki-Choon, 51, as justice minister. Rhee Yong-Man, head of the Office of Bank Supervision and Examination, becomes finance minister. The energy and health ministers were also replaced.

Roh agreed the appointments at a meeting Sunday with newly appointed Prime Minister Chung Won-Shik.

"President Roh stressed that the government must make all-out efforts to firmly establish legal order and resolve social and economic problems while consolidating the basis for stability," the presidential spokesman said in a televised statement.

Critics of the government immediately complained that the shake-up was intended to continue hardline policies against domestic political opponents.

"The cabinet reshuffle goes against the people's wishes for and end to repressive security-oriented policies. It is clear that the president plans to strengthen these policies," a spokesman at the main opposition New Democratic Party (NDP) said in a statement.

Kim Nyeum, vice economic planning minister, takes over from Lee Hee-Il as energy minister. Ahn Pil-Joon, a retired four-star general, was named to succeed Health Minister Kim Jung-Soo.

Last Friday, President Roh replaced headline Prime Minister Ro Jai-Bong with Chung, a 62-

year-old conservative educator.

Roh is counting on the cabinet changes and Thursday's amnesty of 258 people accused or convicted of political crimes to calm weeks of anti-government demonstrations sparked by the fatal police beating of a university student on April 26.

The unrest has been the most widespread and serious since 1987 protests forced Chun Doo Hwan's authoritarian regime to concede free presidential elections.

Unlike in 1987, middle-class Koreans have not taken the demonstrations. Roh, clearly concerned to calm public concern about rising prices and a billowing crime wave, took the opportunity to dump Finance Minister Chung Yung-Euy and Justice Minister Yi Jong-Nam — both seen as hardliners.

Dissidents and opposition parties condemned Chung's appointment as premier, saying the conservative educator would merely continue repressive policies against political dissent.

Chung, 62, is best remembered for outlawing the teachers' union in 1989, when he was education minister. On taking office Saturday, he immediately called for stability and calm.

As Roh and Chung met at the presidential mansion to finalise the list of the new cabinet, thousands of police deployed in drenching rain at a vast plaza in western Seoul to enforce a ban on a planned anti-government rally by activist teachers.

Rally organisers later switched the venue to a university sports ground where more than 10,000 teachers gathered to protest against the suppression of their union. No clashes were reported.

2 sentenced to death for grave robbing

PEKING (R) — Two leaders of a 60-strong gang of grave robbers who stole gold, silver and jade buried to help the corpses in the after-life were sentenced to death in the south China city of Hengyang, an official newspaper said. The gang robbed 70 graves of jewellery worth more than 48,000 yuan (\$9,000), said the Human Daily.

Yoko Ono offers scholarships to remember Lennon

LONDON (R) — Yoko Ono, widow of rock singer John Lennon, has offered Liverpool University £300,000 (\$320,000) to keep his name alive in his hometown, the university said. Ono wrote to the university last month offering the scholarships, university Vice-Chancellor Graeme Davies said. The John Lennon Memorial Scholarships would go to academically excellent students suffering financial hardship, and to boost awareness of environmental issues. "We hope to set up a trust which will forever link the name of John Lennon with the University of Liverpool and the advancement of environmental issues which were close to his heart," Davies said.

Johnny Carson to say goodbye next year

LOS ANGELES (R) — It's "goodbye Johnny," Johnny Carson, king of U.S. television talk hosts, is finally going, but not until next year. Carson, 65, who started saying back in 1979 he wanted to leave The Tonight Show, told NBC affiliate station chiefs in New York: "My last show is going to be on May 22nd, 1992." Along with the trim, perky Carson will go his perpetual sidekick, Ed McMahon, the man with the hearty laugh who never heard a Carson joke he did not like. The show began with McMahon bellowing "h-e-e-r-e's Johnny," but now it will be "h-e-e-r-e's" ... who? NBC, the network which broadcasts the Carson show, played down speculation about his successor. A spokesman said the network would have no immediate comment on his departure nor on his successor. "Obviously The Tonight Show will continue. It has been the most successful late-night franchise in television history," Pat Schultz, an NBC spokeswoman, said in Los Angeles, where the show is taped. Carson will bring the curtain down on his role as the star of the most successful television talk show of all time, still seen by 12 million people each night as he enters his 30th year as its host. Jay Leno, now the show's "exclusive guest host," is considered a strong favourite to replace Carson. David Letterman, whose talk show follows Carson's on NBC, and comedian Gary Shandling, who has had his own show on U.S. Cable Television, have also been mentioned as candidates.

Scientist creating low-flour bread for troops

AMHERST, Massachusetts (AP) — If the U.S. army still travels on its stomach, a University of Massachusetts food scientist is trying to develop a new kind of low-flour, compact bread to help lighten the load. "It could be a totally new type of bread. I don't know if the (U.S. Food and Drug Administration) will accept that definition of bread or not," said Pavnee Chinachoti. "But it looks like bread and tastes like bread." A military research laboratory has awarded Chinachoti \$200,000 over the past 2½ years to search for a more compressible bread to feed U.S. troops in the field. The military is interested in a more compact bread because it would save on storage and transportation. Chinachoti's goal is to develop a bread that can be compressed by nearly a third and spring back to almost 100 per cent of its initial volume. Normal bread recovers only about 50 per cent of its volume after compression. Chinachoti said she thinks she has found the right ingredients, but has yet to reproduce her discovery on a large scale. A year ago the armed forces began replacing the crackers that U.S. troops long crunched in their daily ration with "shelf-stable" bread as part of their ready-to-eat meals. The soldiers sent to the Gulf consumed those meals at the rate of 25 million a month during the war.

Pakistan wants strong Indian government

ISLAMABAD (R) — Pakistan wants a strong, stable government to emerge in India following Rajiv Gandhi's assassination, able to tackle decades of suspicion and armed conflict, government officials said Sunday.

"If it is a strong government it can deal with problems. If it is a weak government it will be concerned with survival. It is in

everybody's interest that it is a strong government," a senior official said.

India and Pakistan have fought three wars since independence from Britain in 1947 and still trade shots across the heavily-armed line of control that divides Kashmir.

Before his death last week in a bomb blast in south India, Gan-

dhi was a key aspirant to the premiership though national elections looked unlikely to give anybody a clear majority.

With the remaining two days of polling delayed until next month, policy makers in Islamabad say they must wait and see what sort of government emerges in New Delhi.

Violence hits Irish Republic, N. Ireland

DUBLIN (R) — Ireland, both the Republic and the North, was hit by a weekend of violence when both Protestant and Republican gunmen went on the offensive despite a temporary truce, now fast-crumbling.

In a cross-border raid Saturday, Protestant extremists from British-ruled Northern Ireland crossed into the Irish Republic and killed a councillor from the Irish Republican Army's political wing, Sinn Fein.

Then in Belfast, Irish Republican guerrillas killed a British soldier and critically injured another in a bomb attack on an army barracks.

"This was a cowardly murder carried out by terrorists who have nothing else to offer the province but death after death," an army spokesman said.

Early Sunday morning, two policemen were injured in a car bomb explosion in Cookstown, County Tyrone.

The violence came against a backdrop of growing optimism over peace talks aimed at returning battle-scarred Northern Ireland to self-government after 17 years of direct rule from London.

Gunmen from both sides of the sectarian divide called a ceasefire when the talks were launched last month by Britain's Northern Ireland minister, Peter Brooke.

That temporary truce now appears to be in tatters.

The Ulster Freedom Fighters, battling to keep the province British, warned after shooting Councillor Eddie Fullerton at his home that there would be more killings unless the IRA halted its "Protestant genocide."

The IRA, fighting to oust the British, has in the past week stepped up attacks on police and soldiers, shot a fruit merchant who supplied British security forces and killed a leading member of the Protestant Orange Order.

After 10 days of bickering and confusion, Brooke finally won all-party agreement last week to hold the talks in Belfast.

New SPD head faces showdown on German role, site of capital

BONN (R) — Germany's opposition Social Democrats (SPD) meet in high spirits this week to prepare a national election challenge to Chancellor Helmut Kohl — and sparks could fly at their congress over sensitive policy points.

The SPD goes into its four-day congress buoyed by a sharp upturn in its fortunes after a crushing election defeat six months ago.

The conservative Kohl is sliding in the polls, the SPD has won a majority in Germany's states and future party chief Bjoern Engholm is near the top of the popularity charts.

Latest polls now put the SPD two points ahead of Kohl, and say the Social Democrats could lure the liberal Free Democrats (FDP) into leaving the chancellor for a centre-left government in 1994.

But debates over united Ger-

many's role in the world or the final site of its capital could generate so much friction at the SPD congress that the party's new lead might go up in smoke.

The congress, which opens Tuesday in Bremen, will be a

crucial test for Engholm, a suave politician who believes in living well. He will have to show a tough streak from the moment he is elected SPD chairman Wednesday.

"It is highly likely that, at the end of the congress, the main actors — including the new director Engholm — will leave more damaged than dynamised," the newsweekly Der Spiegel said.

Engholm, 51, the soft-spoken premier of Schleswig-Holstein state bordering Denmark, has been warning members: "a weak government does not automatically mean a strong SPD."

He reluctantly agreed to lead the fractious party after the abrasive SPD standard-bearer Oskar Lafontaine, who was trounced by Kohl in last December's general election, refused the job.

Lafontaine won only 33.5 per cent of the vote. Latest polls give the SPD 40 per cent.

Down but not out, Lafontaine will keep a sharp watch as Engholm — a man who prefers puffing his pipe in art galleries to politicking in smoke-filled rooms — brings modern man-

agement and centrist economics to the traditional working men's party.

The debate on Kohl's plans to expand Germany's military role abroad will be the crucial hurdle for Engholm at the congress.

Stung by criticism of Bonn's low profile in the Gulf war, Kohl wants to amend the constitution to let German troops be deployed outside NATO in future crises.

SPD local branches have put in 147 proposals on the issue, far more than on any other topic, and a majority of them oppose even unarmed service in United Nations peace-keeping units.

"It is a charming understatement in the SPD's favour to say the party is split on the issue of the army's future role," SPD parliamentarian Horst Nigemeier commented.

Engholm and other moderates, including former Chancellor Willy Brandt, would send troops abroad only if the U.N. were reformed to ensure it commands a multinational coalition rather than one member, as the United States did in the Gulf.

A year after poll win, Burma's opposition silenced by fear

BANGKOK (R) — A year after its election landslide victory, Burma's opposition has been silenced by a military campaign of arrests and intimidation.

What hopes still remain for change lie increasingly with the outside world.

The National League for Democracy (NLD) won 392 of the 485 parliamentary seats contested in the May 27, 1990, election, the first free poll in Burma for more than 30 years.

Harassed by a military government that has refused to hand over power, it has now all but ceased to function.

"The NLD is in a sad state. They have been effectively decapitated by process of mostly imprisoning their senior members," said a Rangoon-based political observer, who insisted on anonymity.

The military has extended its clampdown even to the predominant Buddhist religion and last October sent troops into monasteries to root out dissident monks.

Thousands of Burmese have fled the country, including some elected members of parliament who in December set up a parallel government at the headquarters of an ethnic rebel group.

"It is about as hopeless a situation as I have seen," another political analyst in Rangoon said.

"The people are thoroughly cowed," he said.

Human rights groups say hundreds, perhaps thousands, of political prisoners languish in Burma's jails where torture is common, and at times fatal.

The only hope for change was through international pressure. Professor Josef Silverstein, a Burma specialist at Rutgers University in the United States, said.

"If there is no action from the international community, the military will be able to maintain their hold on the population for another five or 10 years," Silverstein said.

"The people are not going to do anything as they know that they will be met with bursts of gunfire if they do," he said in a telephone interview.

The army shot thousands of people to crush a nationwide uprising for democracy in 1988.

Western diplomats said the international operation in support of Kurdish refugees has set a precedent for collective action on human rights that could be applied to Burma.

Australia which has a significant ethnic Burmese population, has said it might join Sweden in sponsoring renewed pressure on Burma in the United Nations later this year.

"It is now increasingly difficult to avoid the conclusion that... (the) election was a fraud designed by the military only to flush out next layer of dissident democratic leaders," Australian Foreign Minister Gareth Evans said on May 16.

However, U.N. resolutions on Burma have met resistance.

Last November the U.N. General Assembly shelved a resolution demanding release of Burmese political prisoners and expressing concern about the

military's failure to give up power.

Evans said Australia would discuss with the United States and like-minded governments the possibility of implementing a trade and arms embargo against Burma and would seek the support of Burma's regional neighbours China, Singapore and Thailand.

Western governments are concerned that the Burmese army has begun boosting its arsenal and manpower. It has recently agreed to buy weapons worth \$1 billion from China and may be aiming at a future armed strength of 500,000 men, analysts said.

Such a build-up could alarm Thailand, which has established close ties with the junta since 1988. Silverstein said.

One remaining thorn in the side of the military rulers is Aung San Suu Kyi, the charismatic leader of the NLD who has been held under house arrest since July, 1989.

Aung San Suu Kyi, 45, is revered as the daughter of Aung San, the man who led Burma to independence from Britain in the 1940s.

In January, Czechoslovakian President Vaclav Havel nominated her for the Nobel Peace Prize, calling her the "symbol of a widespread movement for civil liberties and human rights."

The award "would be the best means to focus the attention of the world community on the tragic human-rights situation in Burma and help the movement for democracy," Havel said.

OAU ministers set to grapple with change in Africa

LAGOS (R) — The impact of civil wars, pro-democracy protests and the dismantling of apartheid in South Africa will dominate talks by African foreign ministers opening in the Nigerian city of Abuja Monday.

The talks, ahead of the annual Organisation of African Unity (OAU) summit, will give members a chance to chart a course for their continent in a world where powerful trading blocs are being forged in the slipstream of East-West détente.

Nigerian Foreign Minister Ike Nwachukwu said security, apartheid and economic development would be major issues at the June 3-5 summit in Abuja, Nigeria's planned new capital.

Rarely has the 51-member OAU met amid such widespread uncertainty in a continent where some countries are bywords for dictatorship, conflict, famine and corruption.

Several dictators long propped up by superpower rivalry have been forced from office since the last OAU summit — most recently Ethiopia's Mengistu Haile Mariam, who flew into exile in Zimbabwe last week as rebels

advanced.

Some civil wars have increased in ferocity. Others, notably in Angola and Mozambique, have wound down, giving hope for a continent riddled with economic woes. Pro-democracy protests have flared in several African states.

Confidence sources said it was not known how many leaders would be at Abuja because of domestic strife in several countries, including Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Ethiopia, Ivory Coast, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Somalia and Zaire.

North of the Sahara, Arab OAU members such as Algeria and Egypt are coming to terms with the aftermath of the Gulf war.

Ugandan President Yoweri Museveni, the current OAU head, appealed in Kampala last week for democracy and unity to end civil wars, famine and economic collapse.

"Dictatorship is the major source of instability and dictators must be challenged," said Museveni, who himself came to power after a bush war.

Museveni is expected to be

succeeded as OAU chairman in Abuja by Nigeria's military president, Ibrahim Babangida, who has pledged to restore power to elected civilians in Africa's most populous nation next year.

Regional security is a concern of countries such as Nigeria, which fears a "domino effect" in West Africa following a civil war in Liberia and fighting in Sierra Leone triggered by Liberian rebel leader Charles Taylor.

Nigeria is the main supplier of troops to a six-nation West African peacekeeping force in Liberia and has up to 2,000 soldiers in Sierra Leone.

The Abuja talks are starting only days after the departure from Angola of Cuban troops who propped up a Marxist government there against U.S.-backed rebels for 16 years. It was the last major foreign force on the continent.

Military sources doubt whether a collective African security arrangement is possible because of a lack of cash on a continent with a total foreign debt of \$270 billion.

Conference sources said African National Congress (ANC)

leader Nelson Mandela was expected at the summit, where economic sanctions on South Africa would be discussed.

Western diplomats in Lagos said Zulu chief Mangosuthu Buthelezi, whose Inkatha Freedom Party has been involved with the ANC in South African township violence, might also attend.

"Maybe three or four African nations will push for the removal of sanctions at the summit but the vast majority will resist such a move," Otadapo Fafowora, a former Nigerian ambassador to the U.N., told Reuters.

But he said the mood was one of cautious optimism following Pretoria's moves to dismantle pillars of apartheid.

OAU Secretary-General Salim Ahmed Salim said this month that African nations, which hope to create a common market, would take a significant step towards economic unity in Abuja.

"In view of the changes taking place in the world... we hope this OAU meeting will be a major event in terms of shifting the focus from political to economic issues," Fafowora said.